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Becoming an Activist Chicana Teacher: A Story of Identity Making of a Mexican American Bilingual Educator in Texas

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Becoming an Activist Chicana Teacher: A Story of Identity Making of a Mexican American Bilingual Educator in Texas

by

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Dedication

To Stephan whose love and support made this study possible.

To Christopher, Daniel, and Lea who always helped me keep things in perspective with their humor and encouragement throughout this process.

To my mother, Aristea Guardia, who has provided me with unending encouragement and loving guidance throughout my life.

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When I retell the story of the long and difficult journey of completing this study, I will speak of those that made the accomplishment possible. My story will emphasize that this has not and could not have been solely an individual effort. There have been many that have contributed guidance, personal support, a listening ear, critique, and reassurance throughout the dissertation process. I will always remember and be forever grateful to my professors, my friends, and my family for all the support, love, and encouragement I have received from them.

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Becoming an Activist Chicana Teacher: A Story of Identity Making of a Mexican American Bilingual Educator in Texas

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This person-centered ethnography focused on the ways one exemplary veteran Mexican American bilingual educator's (MABE's) cultural resources and professional experiences influenced her teaching practices. The study examined her life history and classroom practices to explore the trajectory of her identity making. The framework utilized in this research included a sociohistorical/sociocultural lens and Chicana/Latina feminist theories. Specifically, my research investigated the multiple spaces where a MABE navigated between an additive bilingual education model and a subtractive one.

The study relied primarily on data collected from oral life history interviews augmented by participant observations at a school in a large, central Texas district. The participant, a first grade teacher with 28 years of classroom experience in the same district, was interviewed over a four-year span. Further, classroom observations occurred during a full school year. Additional interviews with educators who worked with the

participant at critical moments in her professional life provided not only triangulation of information, but also a multiplicity of perspectives and foci on the educational landscapes wherein she operated. Narrative analysis of the data involved the decoding and deconstruction of a MABE's active participation in the processes of performing and (re)presenting her identity production including being silenced and speaking up.

The findings revealed a dialectic and dialogic process between personal experiences, early schooling, impositions of policies, and daily-lived classroom experience while constantly navigating and negotiating the challenges of educating culturally and linguistically diverse students. A primary finding revealed the construct of autobiographical consciousness as a MABE's critical awareness of the historical legacy, lived experiences, and the contexts in which she teaches. The study documented silencing through marginalization, as well as establishing voice through agency to understand construction and reconstruction of identities.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Ways of knowing are how we "see the world and ourselves as participants in it" (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986, p. 3). Teachers' ways of knowing are essential to how they teach and learn (Nieto & Bode, 2008). This is especially true for Latina/o teachers and their students, due in large part to the intersections of language, immigration, generational position, class, gender, and race/ethnicity in the U.S. In this dissertation, I investigated the interplay between the cultural knowledge and professional experiences of a veteran Mexican American bilingual educator (MABE) and how that interplay influenced her pedagogical philosophy and practice. Furthermore, I addressed the intricacies of being a bilingual education teacher, a Mexican American[1], and a woman.

This dissertation is a person-centered ethnography; a Latina teacher, Luz Ruiz[2], provided that human focus. By way of an introduction to Luz, it is instructive to read the following statements that she submitted in 2004 to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards[3] (NBPTS) as part of her pursuit of this prestigious, national-level certification. Her statements articulated a pedagogical philosophy that encompassed students, parents, and colleagues through declarations of responsibility, empowerment, and cultural and linguistic respect:

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[1] I use the terms *Mexican American* and *Latina/o* interchangeably.

[2] All people and places have been given pseudonyms.

[3] The non-profit National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was created in 1987 and provides a voluntary standardized process for practicing teachers to meet established criteria of effective teaching. (http://www8.nationalacademies.org)

- It is my responsibility to do all that is in my power to reach out and touch as many lives as I can.
- It is my obligation to empower my students to become critical thinkers, life long learners, and *inquisitors*.
- It is my role to empower, educate and encourage the families and the community of those whom I teach to get involved in educational issues and their children's education.
- It is my duty to share my experiences with my colleagues and to continue the learning journey.
- Provided instruction is tailored to the individual's style of learning, every child can learn.
- Every child is gifted, and all a teacher needs to do is observe the child and look for his or her talent and develop it to its fullest potential.
- A child has to have good self-esteem in order for learning to occur.
- Every student is basically good.
- Students respond to teacher expectations.
- Reading is the basis for all learning.
- Dual language instruction allows students to develop biliteracy skills.
- A child's first language is the framework for acquisition of additional languages.

Luz Ruiz's Educational Philosophy
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2004

Luz's "ways of knowing" herself, her students, their families, and her colleagues are reflected in her statements. The joy she takes in her work is evident. My observations of her actions, as well as our conversations and interviews, confirmed this. On the other hand, she is continually negotiating and navigating between the way she was raised and schooled, what she sees as most beneficial for her students, and the expectations and pressures of the educational system. I witnessed the constant collision of her ideals with the demands of daily-lived experience shaping her identity as a public school bilingual education teacher.

I view identities as multiple, and continually produced and formed through social interaction (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). As long as a person is alive, her or his production of identities is always in process and unfinished. An important aspect of an individual's identity production is self-authoring. The orchestration of the various, often conflictual, voices in combination with continuous positioning results in a self-authoring space that can provide opportunities for action (Holland et al., 1989; Holquist, 1981; Holquist, 1990). This space lends itself to the possibility of improvisation as a form of agency. Throughout this study, these notions of identity and agency through self-authoring are evident.

Similar to Holland et al. (1998), I regard stories of self-understanding that resonate strongly with the teller as inextricably tied to identities. Consequently, narrative played a prominent role in my research, as it addressed my need for a fluid, dynamic method that would preserve the participant's perspectives and words. In this way, Luz was able to tell stories to herself, to me, and to others in multiple contexts.

La Trenza

I first met Luz when we were both starting our teaching careers in the early 1980s. Our paths have crisscrossed over the years. In fact, our lives are interwoven like the strands of a *trenza* (braid). Our first contact occurred when Luz wanted to learn more about the Montessori method[4]; on the advice of a colleague, she came to talk with me

[4] The Montessori method, developed at the turn of the century by Maria Montessori, stresses an holistic approach for educating young children.

about my Montessori classroom. Some years later, we worked together on two unsuccessful attempts to implement a dual language program in her district.

Over the time that Luz and I have known each other, we have shared our stories. Although initially we did not realize it, we were seeking self-understanding through the storytelling of our lived experiences "juxtaposed between our personal practical knowledge of language, teaching and learning and the education of children" (Pedrana, 2004, p. 49). Our ongoing conversations provided a space for dialogue not only about our commonalities, but also regarding our many differences, experienced through events and interactions such as familial warmth and closeness, conflict, slights, and discriminations that formed us. Our *cuentos* (stories) and discussions involved a particular strand of the *trenza* that centered on our work, providing culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students an enriched, additive education.[5] Our work and our stories bound us together over time. McAdams, Josselson, and Lieblich (2006) stated, "We are all storytellers and we are the stories we tell" (p. 3). Therefore, I will begin to tell Luz's story by beginning with my own.

My Story

"You're just a dirty Meskin," my playmate from next door yelled at me after I had won, again, at the game of jacks. The words, as hot and searing as that Texas summer afternoon, plunged into my being. My nine-year-old mind did not intellectually understand the epithet, but, emotionally, the words felt like a sharp knife cutting into my

[5] Our common understanding of additive education entails schooling that is academically challenging and delivered in Spanish and English.

stomach. It was the first and only time anyone has made such a blatantly racist remark directly to me. The words from that long-ago summer remain a hard kernel inside of me that I take out periodically to examine.

We were the only Mexican American family in an Anglo[6] neighborhood. I attended predominately Anglo schools. I spoke English at home and school. Even though they were never directed toward my sisters, cousins, or me, the sounds of Spanish swirled around me in conversations among my mother, father, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. I later asked myself how I had not absorbed this "secret" language that the adults spoke with one another. Now I know that the speaking of Spanish made private communication between my parents possible (King, 2001), but most importantly I realize how the hegemony of English deeply affected my family and my life. To this day my mother has a difficult time speaking Spanish with me. At an early age, I noticed that my elders only spoke Spanish to one another at home, and not in public.

My mother must have felt deeply stigmatized in order to deny me her mother tongue. She had been educated in a public school system in San Antonio that punished students for speaking Spanish. Additionally, she had not been allowed to speak English at home. By not speaking Spanish to me, my mother, I believe, had been trying to spare me the pain she had experienced. Yet this protective measure also resulted in "repressing all longing to speak in tongues other than standard English without seeing this repression as . . . an indication of the way we act unconsciously, in complicity with a culture of domination" (hooks, 1994, p. 173). I believe my mother's moment in history

[6] In south Texas, Anglo is a term used to refer to White, or EuroAmerican.

led her to feel shame about her home language, which resulted in barring her children from Spanish.

In my early years, then, I was neither allowed to speak Spanish at school nor encouraged to speak it at home. Later in life, I made a conscious effort to learn the language that my grandparents and my parents spoke. I had been unable to have a lengthy conversation with my monolingual Spanish-speaking grandmother while I was growing up, and so, even though she lived with us, I never got to hear her *cuentos* directly from her. This saddens me to this day. I know that she had many stories to tell because my mother has shared them with me over the years.

I do, however, have physical and sensorial memories that connect me to my maternal grandmother. I remember her washing my below-the-waist hair with rainwater she collected just for that purpose. I remember sitting close to her side as I learned to crochet and embroider in the backyard on some of those beautiful days we can sometimes have in San Antonio. Another powerful memory I possess is of our shared task of plucking out the little rocks that hid in piles of dried pinto beans, which she would transform into her delicious *frijoles enteros* (whole pinto beans). Our communication had been non-verbal because she had not learned English and I had not been encouraged to develop my Spanish.

Someone once asked why my parents had not spoken Spanish to me during my childhood. I did not have an immediate response and paused to think about the interplay between language and identity that I have found so difficult to understand and which, through the years, has elicited many different emotions in me. I have felt shame about my

lack of fluency in Spanish and guilt about my success in school. According to hooks (1994), "To heal the splitting of mind and body, we marginalized and oppressed people attempt to recover ourselves and our experiences in language" (p. 175). hooks captured what I believe moved me to learn Spanish as a second language and work in bilingual education.

During my undergraduate years at the University of Texas at Austin, I began to self-identify as a Chicana.[7] It was an important step as "an active gesture of political resistance to name identity as part of a struggle to challenge domination" (hooks, 1994, p. 78). At the same time, I stopped using the term *Hispanic* altogether, although I continue to say "Mexican American" or "Latina" at times. I do not mean to imply by this labeling any "essentialism," nor do I intend to paint "social groups as stable or homogeneous entities" (McCarthy, 1993, p. 325). In fact, I have experienced identities as fluid, multiple, and always in process and as "vehicle[s] for multiplying and making more complex the subject positions possible, visible, and legitimate" (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 113). Simultaneously, I concur with hooks, (1994) who commented, "Identity politics emerges out of the struggles of oppressed or exploited groups to have a standpoint on which to critique dominant structures, a position that gives purpose and meaning to struggle" (p. 88).

During my last year as an undergraduate, I became conscious of the daunting struggle of Mexican Americans to have a real opportunity to learn and succeed. A pivotal

[7] I align with Delgado Bernal (1998) on the term *Chicana*. She suggests that dentifying as Chicana is consciously adopted later in life and formed through cultural and political resistance.

life experience occurred during my school observations in the Central Independent School District (CISD). One of its schools was Pecan Elementary, which served the primarily low-income, Mexican American population of east CISD, and the other was Chestnut Elementary, which served the predominantly middle- to upper-class Anglos of west CISD. At Pecan, the walls had peeling paint, and pipes were dripping water in the bathrooms. The school was dirty, dark, and it smelled. The students had to cross under a major interstate highway everyday in transit to and from school. At Chestnut, everything was clean, freshly painted, and filled with light. I noticed that, in addition to the distinct contrast between the schools' environments, there was a big difference in the way teachers at each school treated their students. An observation that I made at the time was that the conversational tone that teachers adopted when speaking with students at Chestnut was in sharp contrast to the constant shouting that teachers directed at their students at Pecan. I knew that there were differences in schools across districts based on the disparity of the amount of revenue collected for property taxes in each district; however, I was shocked that in this one single district such discrimination was taking place without acknowledgement, much less critical discussion of this problem. Instead, it was as if these conditions were the most natural thing in the world.

This experience opened my eyes to the inequities of schooling based on social class and race/ethnicity. The silence of CISD with respect to these disparities made me socially aware, and here I began to search for theories and practices that would impact the education of CLD students.

This journey led me to Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Since my first reading of this book, what has resonated with me is the ". . . basic assumption: that man's ontological vocation . . . is to be a subject who acts upon and transforms the world, and in so doing moves toward ever new possibilities of fuller and richer life individually and collectively" (Freire, 2000, p. 32). I began to search for alternatives to what Freire characterized as the "banking concept[8]" of education that was pervasive in the public schools where I did my classroom observations and student teaching, as well as in the schools which had been the sites of my own experience as a student. My goal was to find an alternative way to teach that would better serve CLD students; it was obvious to me that present strategies and practices were not working for a large number of children. I ultimately chose the Montessori method as a viable option, as it combined theory with practice in a manner which closely matched Freire's (2000) "problem posing" approach to education in which students and teachers are involved in acts of creating knowledge together. My focus on this method pushed me to my next step.

After graduation, I spent the next two years in Mexico City taking an Association Montessori International (AMI) course. Besides acquiring the skills to be a Montessori teacher, a primary objective for me was to discover my roots as a Mexican, historically and linguistically. Being of Mexican descent but limited in Spanish, I feared how I would be perceived and accepted in my ancestral country. However, I was willing to take the risk. My identity was greatly impacted by this experience of being both

[8] Freire (2000) describes banking education wherein students are the depositories and teachers make deposits of information. The teacher also controls what and how much information is to be deposited.

Mexican and American in central Mexico. I became aware of how my story in the present was shaped by the past. I also learned, when I traveled to Oaxaca and other places in Mexico, about the hegemony of Spanish over indigenous languages; this knowledge added to my understanding of the status issues involved in language. During this time the director of the Montessori course introduced me to the developmental stages of Erik Erikson and Carl Jung's theoretical concept of the collective unconscious as a driving force and expression of culture. She emphasized the absolute importance of a teacher's psychological well-being in working successfully with children. At a workshop years later, she specified that there were two crucial concepts for Montessorians that she had wanted her students to take from the course. She said, "It takes a lifelong commitment to continually work toward an understanding of self. It is of equal importance to recognize that not everyone sees the world in the same way" (Workshop notes, June 10, 1999). Girded with this identity awareness and my Montessori certificate, I returned to the U.S.

Back in Texas, I again faced the reality of a Mexican American population that was oppressed by economic, occupational, linguistic, and educational limitations and exclusions. I started a small Montessori dual language school for low-income children with the hope of challenging linguistic and educational inequities, and their negative effects on the potential of young children. I also worked to impact larger numbers of students, instructors, and administrators in my work as a consultant for professional development, a grant writer, and a program evaluator in the public schools.

I came to recognize the profound impact that my life experiences, infused with the interconnection of language and identity, have on personal, cultural, and political worlds. From this perspective, I listened to and retold the story about Luz Ruiz's identity production and agency as a MABE. I also examined her teaching methods *beyond* "best practices" to provide a window into how pedagogy is fundamentally influenced by the ways a teacher looks at herself and the children she serves. I turn now to the research questions that informed my study.

Research Questions

Initially, I set out to examine the practices of an exemplary MABE of CLD student in order to document her pedagogy. It soon became clear to me that the investigation would not be about teaching strategies or best practices as my interests instead turned to the experiences and cultural resources, which shaped her career development and the evolution of her pedagogy. I wanted to examine closely what it meant and felt like to be a MABE implementing innovative teaching practices in a bilingual education setting, and also document the complexity involved in successfully teaching CLD students. Luz's story can impact others in bilingual education by clarifying the autobiographical process of developing identity and its effect on pedagogy and philosophy.

My focus on the trajectory of Luz's identity production and sense of agency engendered the question guiding my dissertation research: *How do the cultural resources and professional experiences of a veteran Mexican American bilingual educator's influence her navigation within and against the public educational system?*

In addressing the question, I ascribe to the notion that identity production serves as a "key means through which people care about and care for what is going on around them" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 3).

Central to the investigation is the idea that "teachers knowing who they are as people, understanding the contexts in which they teach, and questioning their knowledge and assumptions are as important as the mastery of techniques for instructional effectiveness" (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 181). I diverged from and contested the idea that instructional strategies or linguistic practices were the sole means by which MABEs could fashion a way to effectively educate Latina/o students. Instead, I focused on the interplay between Luz's personal background and her professional experiences. I illustrated how Luz navigated and negotiated the constraints of working in the controversial and contested field of bilingual education. Her narratives and experiences revealed constant border crossing, conflict, the struggle with ambiguities, and power issues, in the effort to provide an enriched, additive dual language experience. (Anzaldua, 1999; E. Perez, 1999; Sandoval, 2000; Villenas, Godinez, Delgado Bernal, & Elenes, 2006). This person-centered ethnographic study contributes to the literature on effective teachers of CLD students because it is a close examination of the identity making of an exemplary MABE in Texas.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in the Bilingual Education Context

While effective education of CLD students is important at this present time, it will be even more critical in the future because this population will continue to increase

in the public schools. In 2005-2006, one in every five students in the United States was Latino (Fry, 2008). In Texas, the Latino student population increased 43% from 1993 to 2003 (Fry, 2006). Further, Latinas/os accounted for only 20.8% of Texas' teachers during the 2006-2007 school year, whereas Latinas/os represented 46.3% of the state's student population (Texas Education Agency, 2007). Additionally, the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) has increased dramatically in just the past 15 years. Ruiz de Velasco and Fix (2000) maintained that 40% of all foreign-born youth in public schools are ELLs. Goldenberg (2008) reported that, nationally, "in 1990, one in 20 public school students in grades K-12 was an English language learner. Today the figure is 1 in 9. Demographers estimate that in 20 years it might be 1 in 4" (p. 10). Although not all Latina/o students are ELLs, the challenges of providing equitable learning environments for both groups are similar in light of the high dropout rate, and the academic achievement discrepancy between Latinas/os and White students and between second language learners and monolingual English-speaking students (Valencia, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999).

Major dilemmas in meeting the educational needs of ELLs concern the recruitment, training, and retention of qualified and quality bilingual education teachers (Bustos Flores & Riojas Clark, 2005). According to Valencia (2002), the low percentage of Latina/o teachers compared to Latina/o school-age students is important for several reasons: (a) the presence of Latinas/os in professional positions provides role models for this school-age population; (b) teachers with similar cultural backgrounds engage students more effectively; and (c) diversity in the teaching force offers the possibility for

culturally responsive teaching, which could thereby increase the knowledge and understanding of all those involved in the education of CLD students.

As important as these points are, the challenge of effective schooling for CLD students is not simply an issue of the quantity of Latina/o teachers but also the teachers' pedagogies, as shaped by specific cultural experiences and societal institutions. The call from researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders for more teachers of color is based on the hope that their pedagogies will benefit the CLD students that they teach. However, that may not always be the case since those pedagogies are formed via varied worldviews constructed in particular socio-historical contexts. While Latina/o students' experiences are well documented in studies aimed at deciphering and explaining how best to educate CLD students (Faltis & Hudelson, 1998; Freeman, 2004; Ovando, 1998; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Valdés, 2001; Zentella, 1997), much less attention has been paid to Latina/o teachers' daily experiences of serving ELLs in the context of bilingual education programs. I agree with Buendía, Gitlin, and Doumbia (2003), who stated, "We believe that understanding the relation between structures, discourses, and pedagogical practices is particularly important as diverse cultural populations become the norm" (p. 293). Throughout this study, I will share Luz's narratives about the impact of institutional structures and ideological discourses on her classroom practices and epistemologies in order to make evident interactions and contexts influencing a MABE's identity making.

My definition for identity making draws from Holland et al. (1998): People have multiple identities that are socially constructed through power relations embedded within

particular social practices. This, in turn, brings into question the relationship between culture and self. As Holland et al. stated, "Persons are now recognized to have perspectives on their cultural worlds that are likely to differ by gender and other markers of social positions" (p. 31). The fundamental shifting in the views of the relationship between culture and identity pushes researchers "to ask a broader range of questions about experience and subjectivity and the role of cultural resources in the constitution of this experience" (p.31). This calls for a methodology to "describe how specific, often socially powerful, cultural discourses and practices both position people and provide them with the resources to respond to the problematic situations in which they find themselves" (p. 32). My choice of person-centered ethnography provided me with an avenue to examine what influence a MABE's cultural background and professional experiences exerted on the teaching and learning of Mexican descent students and their teachers (Galindo & Olguín, 1996; Holland et al., 1998; Quiocho & Rios, 2000).

Scholars argue that because of the institution's natural inclination to reproduce societal positions of power related to race/ethnicity, class, gender, and language, educators are involved in a political act, whether they are conscious of it or not (Apple, 1990; Freire, 2000). This viewpoint emphasizes education as a non-neutral process and posits that acquiring English as a second language cannot proceed without serious thought to social and historical issues. As Valdés (2001) indicated:

> Individuals of good will are not aware that they have become instruments of dominant interests. They are seldom conscious of the fact that power is exercised both through coercion and through consent and that, in many cases, people 'consent' to preserving the status quo and to maintaining existing power relationships simply by accepting established practices without question. (p. 155)

Most bilingual education teachers are products of the U.S. public school educational system. Since schooling experiences as well as teaching experiences happen in the social, historical, and cultural context of family, school, and community (Allexsaht-Snider, 1996; Galindo & Olguín, 1996; Quiocho & Rios, 2000), these teachers' education often reflects "a history of racism, exclusion, and debilitating pedagogy" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 6). It is safe to say that Mexican American bilingual educators of Luz's generation are now trying to teach what they never had a chance to experience as students. They had little control over the hegemonic education practices, which dictated that all instruction occur in English. For these students-turned-educators, the process of schooling devalued their language and culture (Valenzuela, 1999). The result was that some bilingual education teachers internalized the idea that English was more important for their CLD students than Spanish.

I still remember clearly an occasion in which I hosted an inservice workshop for bilingual education teachers about what to consider in setting up classroom centers. One of the participants stood up and said, "I don't do any Spanish in my classroom. English is what these students need to succeed and get ahead." Although this attitude is usually not so blatantly expressed, its subtle manifestations were often present during my classrooms observations. At another inservice, a Latina voiced a concern that I heard echoed by several teachers at various times about the hands-on Montessori materials I demonstrated. She vocalized, "That won't last long in the classroom; they'll steal it." This deficit perspective emanating from some Latinas/os puzzled me until I realized that

their experience with the hegemony of English, combined with a subtractive curriculum and attitudes based on prejudiced and stereotypical expectations of low income children, had caused some Latinas/os who became teachers to adopt the deficit perspective of the educational system (Fanon, 1967).

There is hope. Many educators, including Latina/o teachers like Luz, resist continuing the reproduction of inequitable schooling (Arce, 2004). In order to teach underserved children in a language that they understand, educators withstand hegemonic forces by creating counterstories and counterspaces, alternative narratives recounting experiences of marginalization and resistance and places for the telling of those experiences (Yosso, 2006). According to hooks (1994), "The power of this [is] that it also forges a space for alternative cultural production and alternative epistemologies — different ways of thinking and knowing that are crucial to creating a counter-hegemonic worldview" (p. 171). Although schools reproduce the ideologies and cultural values of the dominant class (Foley, 1994), there is space for self-authoring, which can cause interruptions of this reproduction (Holland et al., 1998). Through engaged pedagogy, educators and students "develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (Freire, 2000, p. 71). hooks (1994) "emphasizes that this is the important initial stage of transformation — the historical moment when one begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one's political circumstance" (p. 47). Freire argued that it is through the process of reflection and action that assumptions and beliefs, co-constructed socially and

historically, can be examined; educators can make explicit the beliefs, values, and principles which guide their actions and lead to transformation.

Significance of the Study

It is not often that Mexican American female teachers who choose to specialize in bilingual education have their cultural and professional voices heard. According to Villenas et al. (2006), "Very little research . . . paints nuanced and complex portraits of Chicana/Latina lives from which we can consider their cultural/gendered perspectives, resources, and resilience in interaction with institutions of power (i.e., schools, universities, adult education programs, hospitals, social service agencies)" (p. 4). My research considered the complexities of the Mexican American experience in Texas, the lack of research placing a MABE at the center of study, and the dearth of accounts of the daily experiences of a Mexican American woman in bilingual education. This investigation was not a quest for transcendent truths about the role of identity and agency in pedagogical practice and philosophy. Rather, I chose to produce a decoding and deconstruction of Luz's active participation in the processes of performing and (re)presenting her multiple identities through our conversations, enactments in the classroom, and social situations to evidence the influence of identities on teaching.

Teachers, especially bilingual educators, have a responsibility to possess self-awareness and to examine assumptions, beliefs, and expectations regarding linguistic minority students (Bartolomé, 2008; Nieto & Bode, 2008). This is partly justified by the fact that the power of teacher expectations affect students' academic performance (Eccles & Jussim, 1992; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Rosenthal, 1987; Rosenthal &

Jacobson, 1968; Snow, 1969). A full understanding of such a well-documented fact requires an examination of the complex connections of the personal, social, and historical with educational structures, policies, and practices. This will allow us to understand how a teacher arrives at her or his expectations. For example, Luz's professional journey began during the time of the 1960s-1970s Chicano Civil Rights *Movimiento*, when modern bilingual education was in its initial phase of development and implementation (Blauner, 1987). It was a time of trial and error for teachers, researchers, and policymakers involved in this educational innovation. During this tumultuous time, teachers had little access to quality materials and limited guidance from research. Researchers scrambled to produce studies investigating different approaches to teaching bilingual education. Policymakers argued about rules, laws, regulations, and money.

The world that shaped Luz's pedagogy continues to exhibit contested ideas and policies. As a result, key stakeholders continue to grapple with defining effective bilingual education in combination with issues that include accountability, immigration, and English-only. At present, the accountability culture of high-stakes testing permeates every public school district, school, and classroom. The effects are felt at every grade level, especially in schools that serve low-income students. The reliance on high-stakes testing exacerbates incidences of retention and an alarmingly high drop out rate for these students. Further, when popular media cover the topic of immigration, xenophobic attitudes are strongly reinforced, which fuels hostile and violent actions toward individual immigrants as well as the group as a whole. Bilingual education itself

continues to be debated at the state and national level. Laws passed in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts eliminated bilingual education (San Miguel, 2004), thus signifying the popularity of the English-only movement.

At our present historical moment of accountability and anti-immigration sentiment, Mexican American educators teaching CLD students also face classroom difficulties and struggles (Galindo & Olguín, 1996). In this context, it is particularly noteworthy that Nieto (2003) asserted that even under the best of circumstances, it is a challenge to be in the classroom. One significant problem that has been documented (Arce, 2004) concerns the isolation that bilingual education teachers often feel. Therefore, an in-depth look at a MABE in the context of bilingual education and the public schools should provide additional context and data to the ongoing discussion concerning retention and recruitment of bilingual education teachers.

Central to this study is the notion that "teachers knowing who they are as people, understanding the contexts in which they teach, and questioning their knowledge and assumptions are as important as the mastery of techniques for instructional effectiveness" (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 181). This study asserts that an "autobiographical consciousness" can serve as a mediating tool for exploration and strengthening self-understanding. The concept of autobiographical consciousness applied to the field of education relates to a teacher's evolving awareness of contradictions and conflicts arising from power, position, and privilege, as well as the legacy of oppression and discrimination (especially see Chapter 6). The examination of Luz's lived experiences

and practices, through a person-centered ethnography, is my contribution to increasing the understanding of what constitutes a successful teacher of CLD students.

Organization of the Dissertation

The chapters situate Luz's *cuentos* and relevant *historias*, including those of bilingual education, in the foreground. This first chapter set the stage with a broad discussion of bilingual education, CLD students, and MABEs in the U.S. I introduced the participant and presented my positionality and relationship with Luz. Key terms used throughout the study were defined. The research question guiding the study was specified. The review of literature in Chapter Two presents my theoretical framework, which draws on Chicana Feminist theories and pedagogies, in order to understand how Latina teachers construct themselves and their students. I also provide an overview of theories regarding identity formation and make the connection between identity and story. Chapter Three, "A Close Look: Shaping a Person-Centered Ethnography about a MABE's Trajectory" discusses my methodology and methods. I explain what person-centered ethnography entails and why it was the best fit for this investigation into the interplay of personal background and professional experiences of an exemplary MABE. I detail the methods for collecting my data, the type of data collected, and the analysis.

In Chapter Four, *La Historiadora* (The Historian), I interweave Luz's professional and personal stories, based on her interviews, to reveal her life history. The focus is on what she says is her teaching philosophy and how it is shaped by her cultural background and professional experiences. In Chapter Five, *La Educadora* (The Educator), I present the data from my participant observations during our year together.

This chapter looks at how Luz negotiates and navigates her practice in the classroom, and her interactions within and outside the school environment. I present the challenges of her being, becoming, and belonging, plus the influence of her cultural background and professional experiences on her pedagogies.

I conclude with my general findings and themes in Chapter Six and discuss how this investigation informs the area of identity formation and agency of Latina educators through a close look at what a veteran MABE like Luz says and does. I draw from Holland et al.'s (1998) view of self-authoring to frame my overall conclusions. I end with a discussion of the implications of fostering an autobiographical consciousness as a mediating tool for those working with CLD students, insofar as exploring and strengthening self-understanding, and utilizing veteran educators as mentors for those teachers new to bilingual education.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Researchers have rarely connected the trajectory of identity formation of Mexican American bilingual education teachers with their pedagogical practices. My dissertation addressed this problem by examining identity and agency with autobiographical storytelling of life history and thick description of a MABE's teaching practice. This research was informed by and has augmented three major areas that will be reviewed in this chapter. These areas are bilingual education in Texas, identity formation, and funds of knowledge that link the personal and professional. Additionally, I discuss Chicana/Latina feminist theories as a theoretical framework from which I drew from for this study.

I begin this chapter with an overview that situates bilingual education in Texas history and also considers the effects of subtractive schooling on students and teachers. The background and context include a discussion of the Mexican American experience and their still largely unsuccessful pursuit of equity in education. Next, I review identity literature in order to frame how a Mexican American bilingual teacher makes sense of herself while embedded in a particular sociocultural and historical context. This section also includes the concept of "figured worlds" to explain how cultural resources, relationships, and interactions impact identity making (Holland et al., 1998). The next section connects the concept of funds of knowledge with personal knowledge and professional knowledge by examining narrative studies of teachers of color. I connect

story and identity to underscore the importance of narration, or storytelling, as a tool to form identity and to inform others of how you see yourself (Holland et al., 1998; McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006). I conclude with a review of Chicana/Latina feminist theories, with particular emphasis on the genre of personal narrative as a resource that reciprocally relates to personal and professional experiences influencing teaching practices. Hence, I drew from these theories to inform my framework pertaining to a Mexican American bilingual educator's development of her identity as a classroom teacher. I conclude with my conceptual framework of a MABE's identity formation, which I developed from the research areas addressed below.

Bilingual Education in Texas and Its Impact on Bilingual Education Teachers

In Texas, bilingual policy and instruction, accompanied by attendant legal and cultural battles, have affected generations of Latino students, many of whom became parents and educators. Debates and diatribes focused on bilingual education, specifically regarding the relative importance and value of English and Spanish, have felt personal to me. Defined broadly, bilingual education can mean any use of two languages in school, by teachers, students, or both, for a variety of social and pedagogical purposes (Blanton, 2004).

In today's context, a period of demographic transformation in the United States, bilingual education means something more specific. It relates to approaches in the classroom that use the native language of ELLs for instruction. Goals include:

- teaching English
- fostering academic achievement

- acculturating immigrants to a new society
- preserving a minority group's linguistic and cultural heritage
- enabling English speakers to learn a second language
- developing national language resources
- or any combination of the above (www.nabe.org/education)

The straightforward pedagogical effort of bilingual education has also been the flashpoint for the fight over language instruction in Texas, in no small measure fueled by racist and anti-immigrant sentiment. The fact that what is now Texas was once a part of Mexico, and that there are families whose Tejano roots reach back to a colonial past, seems to be swept aside in vehement struggles over language policies and instruction in the state.

Texas Drags Its Patas

The inequities in educational opportunity and access perpetuated for Mexican Americans were in the foreground of the landmark civil rights 1954 Supreme Court decision *Hernandez versus Texas*. The case challenged widespread discrimination against Mexican Americans in Texas. The highest court in the U.S. agreed with the argument that Mexican Americans were "a class apart" and therefore as a group were protected under the 14th amendment. Also, in that same year, *Brown versus U.S. Board of Education* struck down the "separate but equal" segregated model of public education. These federal judgments had little effect on Texas school policy. In November 1970, Judge William Wayne Justice issued Civil Order 5281. This Order called upon the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to enforce school integration, as per the 1954 *Brown* judgment (Kemerer, 2008).

In the two or three years preceding Justice's Order, Latino student activism in Texas called for educational equity. Students staged walkouts in Edcouch-Elsa (Guajardo & Guajardo, 2004). In the small town of Crystal City, they presented many demands including one that racist teachers be dismissed and that bilingual education be instituted (Trujillo, 1998). These students, self-identified as Chicanos, were fighting for their educational rights and were carrying on a tradition of resistance and self-determination that had begun generations before, at least since the time of the No Spanish Rule of 1918 that criminalized speaking Spanish in schools (Blanton, 2004; A. Perez, 2007; San Miguel, 1987). For decades it was permissible to punish those who spoke Spanish in school. In the 1950s and 1960s, students' names were routinely anglicized, Spanish speaking students were placed in classrooms with students many years their junior, and the "ruler on the knuckles" method of English instruction was neither an urban legend nor a rural one (N. Flores & A. Guardia, Personal Interview, December 18, 2004).

Within these harsh conditions, Mexican American families in South Texas exploded the stereotyped notion that they did not value education through the formation of *escuelitas*, which began in the 1920s and continued through the 1960s (A. Perez, 2007). These "little schools," which operated in people's homes, offered instruction in reading and writing in Spanish to pre-school aged children. At least one district, the Laredo Independent School District, established the first bilingual education program before the enactment of the Bilingual Education Act of l968 (Andersson & Boyer, 1976).

Initially, the Bilingual Education Act was an underfunded mandate (San Miguel, 2004). Many districts were not able to afford adequate programs to serve their students.

Students enrolled in these programs were, and continue to be, concentrated in districts with low property values. Therefore, revenues for schools based on property taxes were far lower than those in more affluent parts of town or the state. The numerous attempts to equalize funding throughout Texas have been, in no small measure, a conversation about bilingual education and other services needed by underserved populations to make the promise of a quality public education a reality. In fact, they were being denied what was their right (Kozol, 1991).

Modern bilingual education was born from protests as well as litigation and legislation (A. Perez, 2007). Chicana/o activists fought for equity in the classrooms and courtrooms of Texas during the social movement of the 1960s and 1970s, *El Movimiento*. As a result in 1969, Texas Senator Carlos Truan's House Bill 103 finally eliminated the No Spanish law of 1918. According to A. Perez (2007), Truan "clearly rode the political wave created by an unprecedented Mexican American/Chicano movement. This quest for civil rights incorporated cultural and language rights" (p. 9). The right to be taught in a language that a student can understand and the struggle over bilingual education is ongoing.

The opposition to bilingual education cannot be justified in light of its widely known and verified track record of effectiveness. Bilingual education has been proven "generally more effective than other programs such as ESL alone, not only for learning content through the native language but also for learning English. This finding has been validated by many studies and meta analysis throughout the years" (Nieto & Bode, 2008, p. 245). However, the relative efficacy of a number of teaching models, even the

necessity for bilingual education, continues to be debated in research studies, in the halls of congress, and in the media.

In recent years, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was considered by some to have ended federal support for bilingual education because of its emphasis on acquiring English (San Miguel, 2004). In Fall 2007, there were discussions at a Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) meeting about the possibility of providing English Immersion instead of bilingual education. At taxpayers' expense, the SBOE brought in experts in English Immersion to testify at the hearing. Debates have raged on about the efficacy and value of various models. Parents have often been confused by what they have heard about bilingual education and whether it would really help their children *tener un mejor futuro* (to have a better life).

Educating Latinas/os

Some studies have examined Latina/o students' failure in schools. Others have viewed the academic underachievement of Latina/o students from a different perspective. These researchers investigated why schools have been failing Latina/o students (Bartolome, 1998; Kozol, 1991; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Yosso, 2006). Valenzuela (1999) articulated and applied the construct of "subtractive schooling" to probe the often negative and culture-denying relationship between academic achievement and the schooling process. She explained, "I came to locate 'the problem' of achievement squarely in school-based relationships and organizational structures and policies designed to erase students' culture" (p. 10). Her study revealed the subtle, and

sometimes not so subtle, social process involved in the negation and removal of cultural resources from Mexican-origin youth.

The literature on caring in education has emphasized the importance of relationships between school personnel and students (Noddings, 1984; Valenzuela, 1999). In fact, Valenzuela identified positive relationships as necessary to motivate Latina/o youth to achieve academically. These relationships could be divided into two types: those of authentic caring and ones of aesthetic caring. Aesthetic caring centered on abstract notions or ideas, while authentic caring was essentially about relationships (Noddings, 1984; Valenzuela, 1999). Valenzuela maintained that the socialization of Mexican children led to their embracing learning and academic achievement within the context of nurturing and mentoring relations. The concept of relationship as authentic caring is expressed in the following vignette.

Valenzuela (1999) related that Mr. Sosa, the band teacher at the school where she conducted her study, slowly and carefully gained the respect and trust of his students by bringing homemade food for them. He observed that his students needed a nutritional boost because of their long day at school, so he consistently brought his students tacos he made at home. The tacos served the dual purpose of allowing students to consume culturally familiar food while having conversations with him. Mr. Sosa's relationships with his students modeled mutual respect and cultural inclusion. Based on observations and interviews with students and their teachers, Valenzuela realized that the students voiced "a model of schooling premised on respectful, caring relations" (p. 61).

In contrast to authentic caring, Valenzuela explained aesthetic caring as primarily about abstraction of ideas and practices. She ascribed this type of caring to the subtractive assimilation ideology of the school, evident in policies, procedures, and practices, as well as in the quality of relationships among staff, faculty, students, and their families. The body of literature on subtractive assimilation (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999) asserted that this mentality resulted in alienation between student and school, student and teacher, and even among peer groups. Valenzuela's (1999) analysis of school interactions indicated a lack of respect for Mexican culture and the Spanish language; she documented schooling "as a powerful, state-sanctioned instrument of cultural de-identification, or de-Mexicanization" (p. 161).

In light of the compelling data gathered about the subtractive process of schooling, Valenzuela (1999) advocated for an additive process in which school personnel would "search for connections where trusting relationships constitute the cornerstone for all learning" (p. 263). She suggested a vision of schooling wherein teachers were authentically caring and the students felt cared for. The complexity of the politics and processes of a school environment demonstrated that the current educational climate has been problematic for teachers who strove for connection and who wanted to "embrace a more authentically caring ideology and practice" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 263) necessary for additive schooling. As she saw it, "Most fundamentally, additive schooling is about equalizing opportunity and assimilating Mexicans into the larger society, albeit through a bicultural process. In this world, students do not have to choose

between being Mexican or American; they can be both" (p. 269). This transformation to additive schooling, where teachers would include students' cultural resources or funds of knowledge, entails an ideological, paradigmatic shift that is not about teaching strategies, but how a teacher views herself and her students. The shift involves the cultural and social linkages that result in what has become known as identity.

Identity Formation

A person's production of identities is always in process and unfinished. Norton (2000) defined identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). Thus, identity making brings together personal experiences with collective worlds s/he inhabits culturally, socially, and historically (Holland et al., 1998).

Holland and Lachicotte (2005) note that identity is a fairly recent conceptual construct and highlight that Erik Erikson first popularized it in the 1950s. It is helpful to consider how Holland and Lachicotte contrast two different formulations of the concept of identity by theorists Erikson and Mead:

> An Eriksonian "identity" is overarching, weaving together an individual's answers to questions about who (s)he is as a member of the cultural and social group(s) that make up his or her society. A Meadian identity, on the other hand, is a sense of oneself as a participant in the social roles and positions defined by a specific, historically constituted set of social activities. Meadian identities are understood to be multiple…. Eriksonian approaches, in contrast, attribute psychodynamic significance to achieving a coherent and consistent identity that continues over the course of adulthood. (p. 3)

An Eriksonian perspective is primarily concerned with the universal psychological aspects of the goal of achieving a consistent identity (Holland & Lachicotte, 2005); while a Meadian view emphasizes the interactive aspect of identity formation that is continually happening dependent on the social and historical context. With these two lines of theorizing in mind, I frame my understanding of identity with an emphasis on a Meadian perspective following a sociocultural approach.

Holland and Lachicotte (2005) explain that people "creatively direct the sets of collective meanings to their selves, and through this orchestration come to be able to organize and narrate themselves in practice in the name of an identity, and thus achieve a modest form of agency" (p. 32). This idea of agency is a crucial aspect of identity production, as we are never only carbon copies of our cultural system (Holland et al., 1998; Urrieta, 2005; Urrieta, 2009). As Holland and Lachicotte (2005) point out, "We develop identities in the manner of jazz musicians rather than player pianos" (p. 32). With this in mind, Urrieta (2005) recommends taking social practice theories further by examining improvisations as agency. According to Holland et al. (1998), "Improvisation can become the basis for a reformed subjectivity" (p. 18). However, the construction of identity must take into consideration the cultural parameters (Holland et al., 1998). What you *want* to be or become must be weighed against what you are *allowed* to be or become. Identity making through social interactions empowers and constrains in place and time in the worlds we live in. The process of identification can be understood as happening within socially and culturally constructed worlds.

Figured Worlds: The Landscapes of Identity

According to Holland et al. (1998), figured worlds are places where identities are shaped dialogically by means of listening and speaking in moments of relating to others. The authors elaborated four notions pertinent to the construct of figured worlds:

> First, figured worlds are historical phenomena, to which we are recruited or into which we enter, which themselves develop through the works of their participants. Second, figured worlds, like activities, are social encounters in which participants' positions matter. Third, figured worlds are socially organized and reproduced; they are like activities in the usual, institutional sense. Fourth, figured worlds distribute "us" not only by relating actors to landscapes of action (as personae) and spreading our senses of self across many different fields of activity, but also by giving the landscape human voice and tone. (p. 41)

Figured worlds bring together positioning, improvising, orchestrating, and dialoguing, which influence production of identities. This construct "provides a means to conceptualize historical subjectivities, consciousnesses and agency, persons (and collective agents) forming in practice" (Holland et al., 1998, pp. 41-42). In other words, figured worlds are places where the participants glean who they are through encounters and activities that involve both status and hierarchy (Urrieta, p. 108). Thus, positioning of participants in social encounters is significant but not fixed fate (Holland et al., 1998). In fact, there is constant negotiation of positionality. The idea of positionality refers to how a person is given a certain position in a figured world, such as "troublemaker," "over-achiever," or "English language learner" (Urrieta, 2007).

Position and Privilege

Positionality is an aspect of figured worlds in which experiences designate status and hierarchy. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) concepts of field and "symbolic capital,"

or social worth, contributed to the explanation of positional identity. Language, especially, functions as an indicator of relationships, social position, and privilege. In the U.S., differing levels of English proficiency are used as indices of social categories. The hegemony of English highlights its relative status and power in devaluing Spanish. In this linguistic hegemony, English is seen as superior, and Spanish is viewed as inferior. Since language is a marker, the speakers of a language take on either the privileged or devalued position of their language. It follows, then, that speakers of English assume a privileged status, while speakers of Spanish take on an inferior status (Shannon, 1995). This hegemonic discourse has permeated all areas of the figured world of bilingual education.

Positional identities could become deeply embodied. "Fossilization" is the term Vygotsky used to label "the process in which the historical sources and the distinctiveness of behavior are erased by its automation" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 141). The hegemonic discourse of English superiority and Spanish inferiority has exemplified an historical legacy internalized by some in bilingual education. Holland and Lachicotte (2005) elucidated, "Power relations, in particular, are thought to shape a person's self (or a group's identity) by 'positioning' — distinguishing and treating a person or group as gendered, raced, classed, or other type of subject" (p. 5). Every individual participates in this positioning in some way. Therefore, identity production can be conceptualized as constantly answering and orchestrating multiple voices, which are often in conflict (Holland & Lachicotte, 2005; Holland et al., 1998; Holquist, 1990; Moraes, 1996; Urrieta, 2005).

Space of Authoring

Power and prestige relegate a participant to a position, or multiple positions, in a figured world. A person is then "limited to varying degrees of accepting, rejecting, or negotiating the identities being offered to them" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 111). The participant's acceptance, rejection, or negotiation of these assigned identities in his or her figured world creates a "space of authoring" (Holland et al., 1998; Urrieta, 2007). Holland et al.'s notion of space of authoring borrowed from Bakhtin's idea of multiple inner dialogues that occur when making sense of ourselves and happen because we are addressed by our figured worlds and must answer. Urrieta explains," Authorship is not a choice; however, the form of the answer is not predetermined" (p. 111). Self-authoring by improvisation and orchestration were notions that impacted my examination of Luz's identity making and agency in the figured worlds of bilingual education at the school, district, state, and national levels. Each of these figured worlds formed "a landscape of objectified (materially and perceptibly expressed) meaning, joint activities, and structures of privilege and influence - all partly contingent upon and partly independent of other figured worlds, the interconnections among figured worlds, and larger societal and trans-societal forces" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 60). The authoring is of the self, by the self, but the words of collective experience must be employed (Holland et al., 1998).

Storylines in Bilingual Education: Subtractive versus Additive

A figured world revolves around narrative. Therefore, essential to a figured world is the narrative comprising storyline and characters (Holland et al., 1998). Important to the discourse of bilingual education are the two storylines of subtractive bilingual

education and additive bilingual education, within which teachers' identities are co-constructed through social and cultural practices.

The compensatory storyline has been foremost about a subtractive, deficit model. The narrative has been framed by the idea that knowing another language "interfered" with learning English and was considered a "handicapping condition." The program of bilingual education was placed under the auspices of special education in many school districts. The perception has been that bilingual programs were not cost effective and kept students from learning English (Crawford, 1997). Based on this story, subtractive bilingual education had as its goal to remediate the students with the "problem" of having a language other than English. The priority of this type of program has been teaching English to mainstream the students as quickly as possible; the native language was treated only as a bridge to English and dropped as a means of instruction at the earliest opportunity. Further contested components of this model were segregation of the linguistically different students and insufficient time (usually two to three years) to acquire a second language for academic purposes (Ovando & Collier, 1998). The subtractive process of schooling deprives students of linguistic, social, and cultural resources that could possibly contribute to school success (Valenzuela, 1999).

In sharp contrast, additive bilingual models purport to be culturally respectful ways to foster academic excellence. The vision is to value both the home language and English. Additive bilingual education has assumed many names but, whatever the name, the goal remains the same: an enriched education for students to achieve academically in

two languages. There have been numerous studies on the effectiveness and benefits of this type of program (Thomas & Collier, 1997; Torres-Guzman, 2002).

The two types of bilingual education form "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52). The figured worlds of the compensatory and the enrichment models of bilingual education are each an example of "a landscape of objectified (materially and perceptibly expressed) meaning, joint activities, and structures of privilege and influence" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 60). As the following section makes clear, this was a helpful construct to explicate a MABE's cultural resources and positioning in her multiple worlds.

Connecting Funds of Knowledge and the Professional Knowledge Landscape

Mexican American teachers bring certain cultural resources to their experiences as bilingual educators that play a powerful part in the shaping of their identity (Galindo & Olguin, 1996). Further, the professional identity of Latina/o teachers is constructed and re-constructed through the practice of bilingual education, imparted by educators who, in their own early lives, did not have the opportunity to be educated in an academic bilingual setting, program, or classroom. The teacher is, thus, an agent who has helped to create and maintain a cultural system negotiating between the way s/he was raised and educated and what s/he now sees as most beneficial for students. There are some Latina/o teachers who have incorporated their and their students' funds of knowledge

into the classroom. Other teachers seem to park their funds of knowledge right outside the classroom door.

Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg (1992) traced the roots of the idea of funds of knowledge to Eric Wolf's *Peasants*. They explained:

> Wolf distinguishes several funds that households must juggle: caloric funds, funds of rent, replacement funds, ceremonial funds, social funds. Entailed in these are wider sets of activities requiring specific strategic bodies of essential information that households need to maintain their well-being. (p. 314)

Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González (1992) extended the idea of "these historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133) to the schooling of Mexican American children. Their research explored ways that the teacher-as-ethnographer could utilize the concept of funds of knowledge so that instructional practices were transformed and enriched by drawing from Mexican-origin students' and parents' household and community practices and resources (González & Moll, 2002; González, Moll & Amanti, 2005; González, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendón, González, et al., 1995; Moll et al., 1992).

In these investigations, teachers developed skills so that they also became researchers and reflective professionals. Students and parents were viewed as rich resources of information. By tapping into the values, practices, and skills of the home and community, educators came to realize the complexity and richness of ways of knowing that were available to minority students. These studies documented a transformative process that took place as teachers were trained to use ethnographic tools

and provided with space and time to be reflective through dialogue. The focus of these studies was on encouraging teachers to discover the funds of knowledge of students and their families with the goal of enhancing instruction. Shifting the focus of funds of knowledge from students and parents to teachers' cultural resources might be beneficial in order for MABEs to delve into their own funds of knowledge. Moving from teacher-as-ethnographer to teacher-as-autobiographer allows for an examination of a Latina teacher's lived experiences.

Velez-Ibáñez and Greenburg (1992) found that funds of knowledge included dense social networks. Additionally, a mutualistic framework incorporating such values as reciprocity and altruism have contributed to the development of a collectivist orientation, which have formed an aspect of Mexicanist[9] cultural knowledge (Vélez-Ibañez, 1983; Zamora, 1993). The mutualistic frame and dense social networks have been founded on the cultural construct of *confianza,* mutual trust (Vélez-Ibañez, 1983*)*. In his study of *tandas*,[10] Vélez-Ibañez defined *confianza* as "the willingness for persons to stand in a reciprocal relationship with one another" (p. 10). Critical to the cultural construct was that "reciprocity is an exchange in which people give each other material items, favors, or labor without expecting anything in return at that time or in the immediate future" (p. 11). These aspects of funds of knowledge could play a powerful part in the shaping of the professional identity of a MABE. However, one cannot

[9] According to Zamora (1993), this term captured the idea of community solidarity and a form of cultural nationalism that has been historically utilized by Spanish-language newspapers and mutual aid societies.
[10] *Tandas* were rotating credit associations that were formed and functioned independently of banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions because of limited access to traditional financial services.

automatically assume that a teacher who possesses funds of knowledge would be able to bring these cultural resources into the classroom or appreciate those of her students. A nagging issue for MABEs in Texas has included the subtractive process of their schooling and the marginal position they continued to occupy, regardless of their upbringing or academic and professional success (Macedo, 2000).

According to Connelly and Clandinin (2000), teacher knowledge is made up of personal practical knowledge and a professional knowledge landscape. They explain personal practical knowledge as the way "for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation" (p. 1). A professional knowledge landscape translates to the lived, professional contexts of teachers. Taking this view, one could look at bilingual teachers' personal practical knowledge as funds of knowledge With this in mind, a teacher's narratives might express not only autobiographical funds of knowledge or personal cultural resources as alternative forms of social capital, but also how this knowledge has transferred into classroom practice and pedagogical philosophy (Galindo & Olguín, 1996; Yosso, 2006).

Linking Identity and Story

Ever since I discovered that nursery rhymes and fairy tales were deceptively childlike and, in fact, conveyed much more than what appeared on the surface, I have been intrigued by the role of stories. I realized that stories told by family members and others contained a certain power in their telling and retelling. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) explained, "We live in a world of stories, and though we help shape those stories,

we are shaped by them. Our stories, and the shaping of stories of our professional knowledge landscapes, are narratively constructed" (p. 318). Further, Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) proposed that life history and narrative "offer exciting alternatives for connecting the lives and stories of individuals to the understanding of larger human and social phenomena" (p. 113).

Holland et al. (1998) viewed stories that resonated strongly with the teller as self-understandings inextricably tied to identities. They stressed, "People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are" (p. 3). Further, Sfard and Prusak (2005) "equate[d] identity-building with story-telling" (p. 21). They stated, "We readily embrace the idea of identity-making as a communicational practice and thereby reject the notion of identities as extra-discursive entities that one merely 'represents' or 'describes' while talking" (p. 16). Stated differently, neither identity making nor storytelling exists outside of language and social interactions. Language is socially constructed, positions persons, and organizes experiences (Holland et al., 1998). The self is the teller as well as the tale that is told (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006). That notion allows for the linking of identity making and the expressing of identities through narration.

The Narratives of Teachers of Color

In the last two decades, educational research has shifted to include a focus on the narratives of teachers of color (Beaufoeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Cozart, 1999; Cozart & Price, 2005; Foster, 1990; Galindo & Olguin, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Monzo & Rueda, 2001). This growing body of literature has acknowledged the importance of

understanding the role that culture has played in a teacher's pedagogy by focusing on the voices of the teachers as they have recounted their lived experiences. This literature both documented and responded to the impact of marginalization on teaching and learning by centering the practitioner of color in the research.

Life history has become a common vehicle for collecting teacher narratives. The method has proven useful as a way to understand people's lives and work within their social, political, and historical contexts (Goodson, 2008). As an example, Foster (1990) used this approach to focus on the impact of race on African American teachers' attitudes and views. She argued that these teachers, marginalized by society and educational institutions, had more understanding of the social constraints of race, and less of class or gender. The 16 teachers in her study talked about "their childhood, their family and community life, their schooling experiences at the elementary, secondary, and post secondary levels, their current and previous teaching positions, and their personal philosophies and pedagogies of education" (p. 125). The effective teachers in this study realized that teaching and learning involved more than subject matter; they believed it was a necessity for them to act as change agents to influence their students' realities.

A Latina Narrative Autobiography

Within the small body of Latina teacher narratives, it was illuminating to examine the autobiography of Arcadia Hernández López (1992), a San Antonio, Texas well-known and long-time MABE, in which she recounted her life experiences that spanned most of the last century. What was not presented in her work was just as significant as what she included. López offered a self-portrait that chronicled her triumphant trajectory

from childhood poverty to the achievement of her goal to become a teacher in south Texas. The purely descriptive narrative did not situate her life in the world fraught with official limitations and de facto discrimination in the historical moment in which she lived. She revealed nothing of the struggles she must have encountered in her own schooling and teaching experiences. She narrated that she was very good in Latin in high school, but she was never chosen to go to a yearly tournament. She related, "There was a Latin Tournament every year in Austin, and I could not understand why I was never chosen to participate. I figured out later that I was too shy, not poised enough and did not have the proper clothing" (p. 43). Her explanation expressed nothing of the racism that was an inherent part of a Latina's experience in attending a predominately white school in San Antonio, Texas.

I met this gracious and charming lady; I saw and talked with her at various bilingual education conferences. Many in bilingual education admired her. It was unfortunate that her text did not provide at least some critical lessons learned from her life and practice. She has passed on now. I regret that we do not have interviews of her life story for an analysis drawing from a critical framework to contribute insight into her formation of identity and pedagogy at that historical moment. Perhaps this critical, missing information, now lost forever, represented by its absence the most compelling rationale for bringing to the fore of academic research the lives and pedagogies of Latina/o educators. With this perspective in mind, I acknowledged as worthy of study the uncovering and analyzing of the lives of Chicanas and Latinas who are bilingual educators to fill in their predecessors' omissions and silences.

Limits of Teacher Narratives

Although narratives are powerful tools for understanding teachers' philosophy and practice, questions arise about the relationship between what is said and what is acted out in the classroom. In *Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, Ladson-Billings (1994) provided a view of eight teachers who were effective in teaching African American students. Through her observations and teacher interviews, as well as her own narratives, Ladson-Billings painted a portrait of the practices and pedagogies of the eight women teachers, five of whom were African American and three who were white. The data from the three-year ethnographic study that detail these exemplary teachers' success with African American students, in some measure, resulted from the teachers being a part of their students' lives in ways that extended beyond the classroom.

The culturally relevant practices of the teachers drew from and contributed to the students' experiences. Ladson-Billings (1994) made clear that these teachers were effective because of the culturally relevant instruction they provided their African American students. She stated, "Teachers who practice culturally relevant methods can be identified by the way they see themselves and others" (p. 25). Her text provided a description of multicultural education practices that promoted academic excellence, consciousness of social and political issues, and inclusion of African American culture. However, the text provided little information on the teachers' lives that led to this self-awareness and these culturally relevant teaching practices.

Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) addressed the interaction of the social and the individual in *A Womanist Experience of Caring: Understanding the Pedagogy of Exemplary Black Women Teachers*. She brought together narratives suggesting that exemplary Black women teachers exhibited a womanist type of caring in their pedagogy, a pedagogy formed in their sociocultural contexts. In this womanist orientation to teaching through caring, she explained that the teachers revealed three characteristics: "an embrace of the maternal, political clarity, and an ethic of risk" (p. 71). In her study, Beauboeuf-Lafontant recognized these characteristics as having arisen from the cultural values of Black women. She declared, "It is my hope that teachers will use the womanist tradition to inform their own pedagogy and professional identities and will begin to see themselves as part of a long-standing *American* tradition in which women and men have seen teaching as their contribution to the making of a socially just society" (p. 85).

Galindo and Olguín (1996) asserted that schooling has shaped minority teachers by delegitimizing their cultural resources and history, a real concern for Latina teachers because, "In some cases, minority students who became educators minimized, devalued, or negated their own cultural backgrounds and shifted their values to match those presented by the school" (p. 30). They recommended that Latinas reconceptualize their identities as teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse students, and that minority educators' autobiographical life histories could be utilized to formulate teaching philosophy. In this way, the autobiographical funds of knowledge of the Latina teachers focused attention on the roles of life experiences and personal histories on the shaping of pedagogical practices. The process encouraged the interpretation of past experiences in

light of the present. Cultural values and practices of previous generations were not adopted in their entirety, but selections were made based on what was relevant at the present time. Galindo and Olguin (1996) explained, "Autobiographical reflection can play an important role in this process of selecting and confirming cultural resources related to education that are relevant to minority educators" (p. 53). The reclamation of cultural resources through narrative and analysis provided space for awareness of these resources, clues for ways to bridge home and school disconnects, as well as reflection on cultural assumptions and beliefs.

Research on Latina Narratives Misses the Mark

Weisman (2001) examined bicultural identity and language attitudes revealed in Latina narratives. Her study included interviews conducted with four Latina teachers, each of whom had one to four years of classroom experience. The purpose was to examine the relationships between attitudes toward Spanish and English and what she called bicultural identities. Her work shed light on the connections between identity and language through narrative. Although she did highlight the diversity of Latinas' Spanish/English attitudes in a bilingual education context, Weisman failed to define the terms "identity" or "bicultural identity." The shortcomings of Weisman's research have not been uncommon in teacher identity research; identity definitions have been given scant attention. I believe it is imperative that the research on narratives of Latina teachers in bilingual education, which connect identity formation with professional experiences and cultural background, include definitions of identity. Researchers need to make clear

the orientation employed in their studies. McAdams, Josselson, and Lieblich (2006) outlined three major dilemmas:

> The first dilemma concerns the extent to which narrative identities espouse *unity* or *multiplicity* in the self. The second involves the relative contribution to narrative identity of individual *self* agency on the one hand versus the impact of *society* and social context on the other. The third pits the extent to which narrative identities display *stability* and continuity of the self versus the extents to which they show personal *growth* and developments. (p. 4)

Although McAdam's analysis might seem unnecessarily dichotomous, he does bring to light issues that are critical for a clear view of Latina teacher identity narrative. His analysis emphasized the importance of detailing and discussing how the researcher defined the notion of identity. It is also imperative for the researcher of narratives of women of color to reflect on the theoretical framework that is drawn from for analysis. For my study of a Latina teacher in bilingual education, Chicana/Latina feminist theories and pedagogies gave me a lens to view resistance and resilience as cultural features that impacted her lived experience (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Elenes, González, Delgado Bernal, and Villenas, 2001; González, 2001; Villenas & Moreno, 2001).

Chicana/Latina Feminist Theories

Chicana/Latina feminists have emphasized movement across multiple borders, such as geographic, linguistic, personal, and professional (Anzaldúa, 1999; Pérez, 1999; Sandoval, 2000; Villenas, Godínez, Delgado Bernal, & Elenes, 2006). As a result of this movement, a binary perspective has been rejected in order to adopt *conocimientos*, ways of knowing, that are fluid and always in process and have arisen from the daily political and psychological struggles of women of color. The stories of occupying multiple spaces and confronting contradictions have resulted in the creation of particular

theories, which originate from lived experiences that have been called "theories of the flesh" (Anzaldúa, 1999; Latina Feminist Group, 2001; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2002; Sandoval, 2000; Villenas et al., 2006). According to Madison (1998), theories of the flesh have been defined as "the cultural, geopolitical, and economic circumstances of our lives [that] engender particular experiences and epistemologies that provide philosophies or 'theories' about reality different from those available to other groups" (p. 319). These "theories of the flesh" have provided Chicanas/Latinas the possibility to bridge the contradictions and fragmentation of their experiences (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 2002).

When I first read Gloria Anzaldúa's (1999) *Borderlands/La Frontera*, I found that I had to put the book down periodically. The power of her words made me cry. Saldívar-Hull (1999) reflected my feelings when she stated in her introduction to the second edition of this book, "Anzaldúa spoke to me as a fellow *Tejana*, as a *mujer* boldly naming herself feminist as well as Chicana" (p. 1). Through reading Anzaldúa, I acquired names and words for the thoughts and experiences I had growing up in south Texas. Her storytelling planted the seed that helped me recognize the importance of *autohistoria* and heightened my capacity to reflect on the story it told. I grew to understand that *autohistorias* created autobiographies that blended the personal and the cultural. That seed blossomed into my interest in the epistemologies of Chicana educators, which in turn was nurtured by later readings of the research and writings of *las feministas.*

As a part of las feministas' writings, Anzaldúa's (1999) *mestiza consciousness* was a principal concept that guided me in this research. According to Elenes et al.,

(2001), "This consciousness reflects our understanding that as people, we continue to daily experience the effects of multiple colonizations — including the Spanish legacy, United States imperialism, Mexican nationalism and global patriarchy and heterosexism" (p. 598). *Mestiza* consciousness entailed resilience and resistance, individually and collectively. This awareness opened possibilities for creating new spaces and stories. As Anzaldúa (1999) stated, "I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture – *una cultura mestiza* – with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture" (p. 44). It led to developing multiple identities, ones that did not allow static or narrow definition in the midst of ambivalence and ambiguity that came from border crossings (Elenes et al., 2001). Girded with these insights, I was then enabled to name and explain the constant shifting involved in Luz's life and classroom.

Border Encounters

Anzaldúa (1999) described the U.S.-Mexican border as an open wound, "*una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (p. 25). Borderland scholars have recognized that these borders are not only geographical, but also metaphysical. The crossings have created multiple realities rife with contradictions, ambiguities, and tensions. MABEs have constantly crossed socially and historically constructed borders and, in doing so, have experienced competing discourses that have contributed to discontinuities. According to Elenes et al., (2001), "Border/transformative pedagogies involve cultural politics that incorporate as social practices the construction of knowledge(s) capable of analyzing conflicts over meanings" (p. 691). This implied that border crossings happened in what scholars named a "third," or a transitional, space

(Anzaldúa, 1999; Ellsworth, 2005). It was also within this space of ambiguity that Latinas constructed their knowledge and produced their identities as ongoing.

Bilingual Educators in Transitional Spaces

For borderland bilingual educators, the concept of transitional space has clearly carried with it implications for both identity and pedagogy because it has been a site of struggle and conflict. Anzaldúa (1999) explained, "The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads" (p. 109). According to Ellsworth, this has been possible through "a dispersed, shifting, and contradictory context of knowing" (p. 114) and as a process of struggle involving the need to "constantly . . . change strategies and priorities of resistance against oppressive ways of knowing and being known" (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 114). The fluid nature of subjectivity, formed in relation to the world, reflected this. Ellsworth (2005) clarified:

> Unlike spaces that put inside in relation to outside in an attempt to make the inside comply with the outside, transitional space opens up a potential for learning about the outside without obliterating the inside. Transitional space allows for expressing the inside without obliterating the outside, and for desiring the outside without turning it into self, making it self-same, or controlling it. (p. 61)

Transitional space has provided individuals opportunities for awareness as they have moved between various and multiple positionings. The notion of transitional spaces caused by discontinuities irrupting through border crossings was useful for examining the epistemologies of a MABE like Luz. Such examinations could elicit disclosure of her experiences with occupying multiple spaces, having multiple identities, and inheriting

multiple oppressions, including patriarchy. These experiences were grounded in the intersecting dimensions of race/ethnicity, class, culture, gender, and language, as well as in familial and generational elements (Anzaldúa, 1999; Hurtado, 1996; Pérez, 1999; Sánchez, 2001; Sandoval, 2000; Villenas et al., 2006).

Feminista scholars have articulated the paradigms of the particular ways of knowing of Latinas that emphasized identity formation as a process of struggle always involving power issues. A consideration of the history of schooling in Texas for ELLs and the current atmosphere of accountability resting on "high-stakes" testing have exemplified the constraints imposed on bilingual education teachers today that influence their ways of knowing. My research on the lived experience of one Mexican American bilingual educator confirmed the need to constantly navigate and negotiate within and against the spaces of contested territories.

Mujerista Ways of Knowing

Important contributions to the conceptualization of *mujerista* ways of knowing have included Anzaldúa's (1999) mestiza consciousness, Sandoval's (2000) differential consciousness as a form of oppositional consciousness, and Pérez's (1999) decolonial imaginary. Sandoval (2000) stated, "Differential consciousness is the expression of the new subject position . . . it permits functioning within, yet beyond, the demands of dominant ideology" (p. 43). Decolonial imaginary has challenged the patriarchal approach (both Chicano and Euro-American) to the study of history and called for a consciousness beyond a colonized mentality. Their conceptualizations, which "all point to the spaces of 'beyond survival,' creativity, agency, movement, and coalition building" (Villenas et al., 2006, p. 5) have contributed to the language and framework that enabled

me to think and speak about the notion of autobiographical consciousness (see Chapter 6).

As Hurtado (1996) highlighted, "Being poor, of color, and also a woman results in daily experiences that create a systematically different relationship to knowledge including its production, comprehension, and integration" (p. 372), in part because of societal values attached to such identifiers as race/ethnicity, class, gender, and language. Thus, the mechanisms for the production and acquisition of knowledge "arise out of a particular structural experience that interacts with multiple group membership" (Hurtado, 1996, p. 373). C*onocimientos* have positioned Latinas toward a *mujerista* orientation. Villenas et al. (2006) described *mujerista* as a "hybrid Chicano word to invoke a Latina-oriented 'womanist' sensibility or approach to power, knowledge, and relationships rooted in convictions for community uplift" (p. 7). Chicana feminist pedagogies have bridged Chicana feminist thought and education to re-imagine teaching and learning (Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godínez, & Villenas, 2006) through integration of Latina ways of knowing with the pedagogical spaces of homes, communities, and institutions.

Orchestrating Professional and Ethnic Identities

It has been a fairly recent development that the lives of teachers of color and their narratives have been respected and dignified as subjects of research (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Galindo, 1996; Galindo & Olguin, 1996). In contrast, literature on the occupation and practice of White teachers has been extensive, as exemplified by Lortie's (1975) classic, *Schoolteacher.* Furthermore, while there has been a growing body of research focused on African American teachers' narratives (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Cozart,

1999; Cozart & Price, 2005; Foster, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2005), little progress could be reported on the inclusion of a similar corpus on the lives of Latina teachers in bilingual education. Hence, the selection of Luz Ruiz as the focus of my person-centered ethnography promised to add to the literature.

In this investigation, I analyzed Luz's narratives and practices to discover what an exemplary MABE brought to the classroom. I placed Luz at the center of study "to recover untold stories" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 87). In this manner, I gained access to her teaching and learning. It also allowed me to rethink ways of knowing in addition to the cultural resources of a Latina in bilingual education within the community she serves. According to Holland et al. (1998), "Cultural resources, including the activities and landscapes – the figured worlds – that give meaning to people's interaction, change historically in ways that are marked by the political struggles and social valuation of their users" (p. 45). The following diagram (Illustration 1) represents my conceptual framework of the dialogic process of identity production.

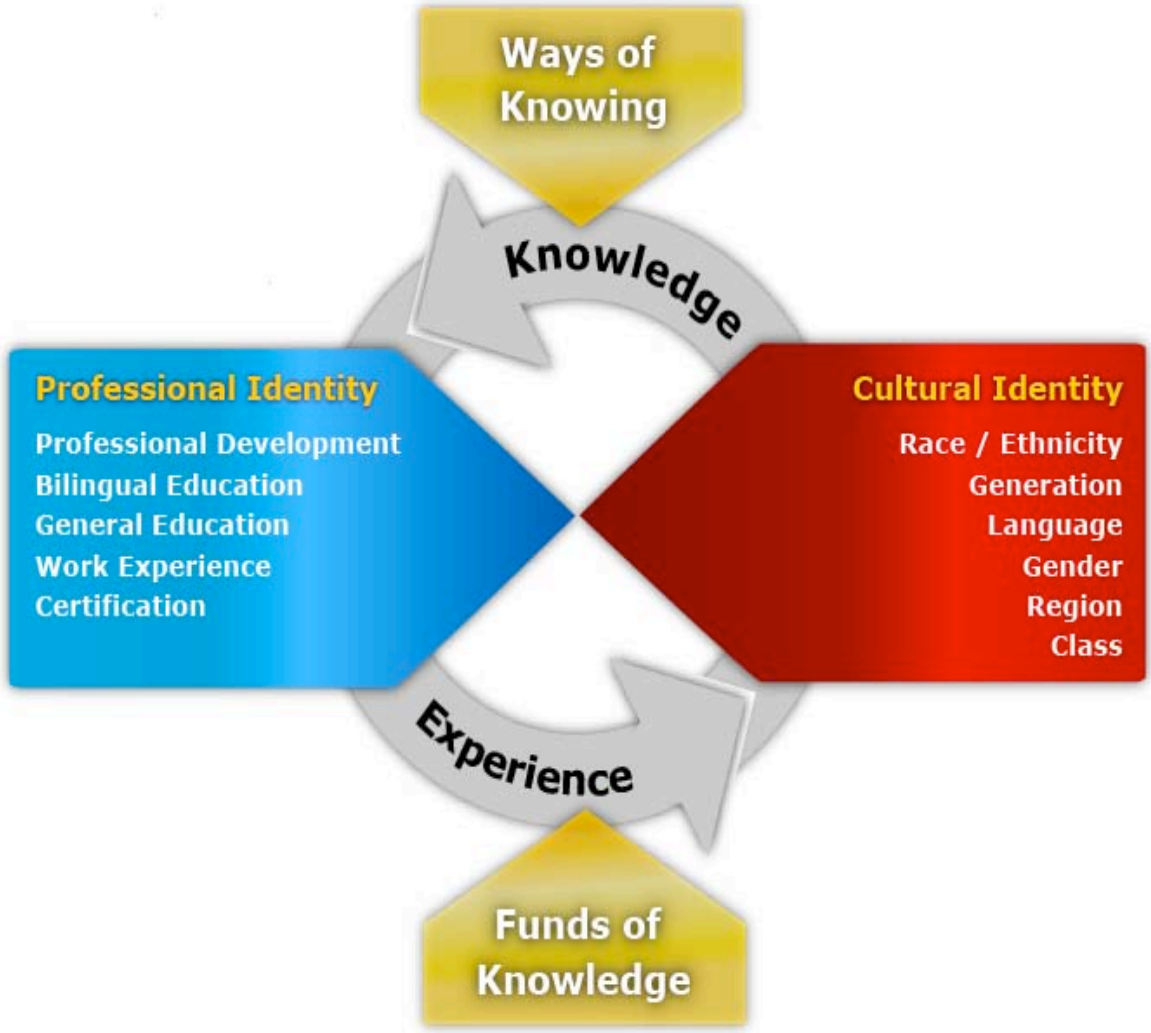

Illustration 1. Dialogic Process of Identity Production

Gender, class, race/ethnicity, language, the geographical region where one is born and raised, and the number of generations one is removed from the country of origin are all elements that influenced ethnic identity. The professional persona is influenced by work experience, professional development, certifications/degrees, general education, and bilingual education. Experience and knowledge are within the arrows that represent the feedback loop that constantly shapes and reshapes that knowledge and experience.

Funds of knowledge and ways of knowing connect the inner (self) and outer (environment). As explained by Holland and Lachicotte (2005), the trajectory of identity formation is not a developmental process that is universal or linear, nor is it solely an inner process. The production of self happens in time, in place, and in relationship to others. For a MABE, the bounded structures of society and self could result in how, or whether, she brought funds of knowledge or a deficit perspective into her classroom in her navigation and negotiation of the public school system.

Although there have been some exceptions with respect to research centering upon Latina/o teacher narratives and identity making, a gap has clearly remained. For example, Quiocho and Rios' (2000) review of published research on minority group teachers and schooling from 1989 to 1998 highlighted almost 40 studies on the subject. In that synthesis, however, only one study (Galindo, 1996) focused entirely on Latina/o teachers**.** Galindo's investigation used the method of narrative analysis to explore the role of identity as a reciprocal social interaction related to the influence of family values. There has been an encouraging, but still small, surge of research since 1998 on bilingual education that has included Latina teachers' narratives (Berta-Avila, 2004; Galindo, 2007; Monzo & Rueda, 2001; Prieto, 2009; Montaño & Burstein, 2006; Prieto, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999).

A lack of scholarship that examined the trajectory over time of identity formation of veteran bilingual education teachers and its connection to the pedagogical practices of educating Latina/o students was evident (Guardia Jackson, 2006). Nevertheless, there was valuable literature to frame my investigation of Luz. For example, the literature of

Chicana feminist theories and pedagogies provided a lens through which to understand the interplay of power, position, and privilege, as well as the shifting and fluid construction of mujeres' subjectivities (Anzaldúa, 1999; Delgado Bernal, 1998; Delgado Bernal, 2001; Elenes et al., 2001; Hurtado, 1996; Pérez, 1999; Sandoval, 2000; Villenas et al., 2006). Notions concerning identity production and agency, provided by the work of Holland et al. (1998), also informed my conceptualization of a self-authoring space for the construction of multiple identities through orchestration and improvisation. Urrieta's (2009) writing about Chicana/o activists contributed to my thinking about consciousness as heuristically developed and dependent on life experiences. Finally, the constructs of dialogue and praxis were useful for the notion of an *educadora*'s (educator's) autobiographical consciousness as an awareness that synthesized *conscientizacãco*, *Mestiza* consciousness, and historical consciousness (see Chapter 6). I hope to strengthen and contribute to the literature on Latina teacher identity narratives with this study that has sought to understand the roles played by language, culture, and identity formation in the practice of bilingual education.

CHAPTER THREE

A CLOSE LOOK: SHAPING A PERSON-CENTERED ETHNOGRAPHY ABOUT A MEXICAN AMERICAN BILINGUAL EDUCATOR'S TRAJECTORY

I examined and analyzed the interplay and intersections of the personal background, both individual and cultural, with the professional experiences and expectations, both internal and external, of Luz Ruiz, a veteran MABE, as she went about the task of educating CLD Latina/o students. I engaged in this endeavor to map and reveal the trajectory of a Latina teacher whose life has spanned the Chicano Civil Rights *Movimiento* through the present time. The current realities of anti-bilingual and anti-immigration rhetoric and actions, as well as a public education system that has become an audit culture[11] (Stronach & Piper, 2008) are examples of complex terrains that Luz must navigate.

I agree with Bernard (1998), who reported that methodology was about choice. The selection of methodology involved "the choice of taking a *verstehen* or a positivist approach; the choice of collecting data by participant observation or in the archives; by direct observation or by interviewing; [and] the choice of making quantitative measurements or collecting oral, written, or visual text" (Bernard, 1998, p. 9). Choosing required deliberate and careful thought about how the four elements of epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods informed one another (Crotty, 1998). Inherent in this choice was my *conocimiento,* way of knowing, which has been derived

[11] Audit culture is a term that reflects accountability in education; it arises from a business or marketing paradigm wherein a high-stakes test becomes the overwhelmingly dominant form of performance measurement of a school, district, and state.

primarily from a *feminista* epistemology. Starting from this standpoint, I have viewed knowledge as socially constructed and have maintained that a researcher should make an effort to comprehend the complexity of others' lived experiences from their viewpoints. Therefore, I chose to operate from a Chicana feminist theoretical framework employing a person-centered ethnographic approach to study Luz's life experiences navigating and negotiating relationships with educational and governmental institutions, organizations, and other people. With my methodology, methods, and teacher participant in place, it was essential to receive permission from the CISD to conduct my study on the specific school site where Luz worked.

I employed methodology and methods which supported an investigation of the participant's pedagogical practices and which allowed me to listen to and analyze her narratives with the eyes and ears of not only a critical researcher, but also those of a Chicana, feminista, ethnographer, teacher, Title VII grant writer, dual language program evaluator, and colleague. This is not to suggest that these perspectives are mutually exclusive, but rather they inform my view of the multiple realities in which my participant has lived and bring her life and work into focus.

Since I wanted to understand the complexities of the shaping of a Latina's professional identity and agency, it was crucial to employ "certain techniques for investigating the relations of individual and context" (Levy & Hollan, 1998, p. 333). Therefore, this investigation engaged the methodology of person-centered ethnography. According to Luttrell (2003), "Rather than providing an aerial (or experience-distant) view of a community or culture, person-centered ethnographies attempt to tell us what it

is like to live there (experience-near)" (p. 6). Luttrell (2003) noted that Robert LeVine first coined the term person-centered ethnography, and defined it as "a way to learn about subjective experiences and distinct social worlds" (p. 7). I did not start out with this methodology in mind. However, after collecting oral history narratives from Luz during a pilot study, I knew that I wanted to capture the complexity of the personal and the professional, the macro and the micro of being a Latina bilingual education teacher. In order to accomplish this, I realized that my role as researcher required that I engage in extensive and varied participant observation and become an oral historian as well.

Holland et al. (1998) discussed "ethnographers of personhood" and stressed that the multiplicity of sites of self as well as the treatment of specific discourses functioned "as the media around which socially and historically positioned persons construct[ed] their subjectivities in practice" (p. 32). Equipped with the methodology of person-centered ethnography and my framework of Chicana feminist theories and pedagogies for this investigation, I guided Luz "to talk about and reflect upon subjective experiences" (Luttrell, 2003, p. 6) in her life and in the classroom.

I closely shadowed her in work-related settings for one year. This allowed me to spend a considerable amount of time observing and talking with Luz. I focused on "the relatively neglected anthropological study of individuals" (Levy & Hollan, 1998, p. 334). In this way, I was able to serve as a witness to her practice and as a translator of her story (Behar, 1993).

Había Una Vez: How Our Story Began

Había una vez, or "Once upon a time," is the way many stories begin. It is a befitting opening for the story of how Luz and I got to know each other and the path that led me to select her as the teacher participant for this study. Luz and I met early in our teaching careers. I was teaching and directing a small parent-run community school. The school was a dual language, Montessori program for children from three to six years old. Luz wanted to learn more about the Montessori method and came to talk with me on the recommendation of a colleague at the school where she taught. Since that time, our professional lives have been interwoven. An important strand of our shared experiences involved two ineffectual attempts at implementing a Montessori-based dual language program in her district. The more recent attempt was thwarted, and ultimately rendered unsuccessful, by the central office administration of the district in Spring 2002. This story, with its unhappy ending, has become entwined with other stories of success, struggle, failure, and hope in serving Latina/o students.

Throughout the years, Luz and I have been telling each other our stories. I came to realize that the storytelling process was an ongoing feature of our relationship. Our *cuentos,* stories, almost always centered on our work with students and our efforts to provide CLD students with an enriched, additive education.[12]

[12] We understood this to mean schooling that was academically challenging and done in Spanish and English.

Why I Shined My Research Light on Luz

Mertens (1998) noted, "Researchers working within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm typically select their samples with the goal of identifying information-rich cases that will allow them to study a case in-depth" (p. 261). Following the strategy of intensity sampling as outlined by Mertens, I selected Luz because she is a committed bilingual education teacher who has received accolades for her practice. Mertens further asserted that this allowed the researcher to identify "individuals in which the phenomenon of interest is strongly represented" (p. 262). This selection strategy required the researcher to have "knowledge as to which individuals meet the specified criterion" (p. 262).

An important step was for the researcher to identity the criteria for sample selection that would permit an in-depth investigation of information-rich cases. The criteria that I employed reflected my initial research interest in the "funds of knowledge" of *veteranas*, veteran Chicana educators in bilingual education. My selection criteria were influenced by studies of "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Although theses researchers used households as their unit of analysis, I used an individual, Luz, who could be regarded as a product of an environment that bore similar characteristics to the Spanish-speaking border community households of low socioeconomic status in their studies. Luz's shared characteristics are as follows: (a) a Mexican American female who identifies as Chicana; (b) she was born and raised in a border community; (c) she lived in a Spanish speaking home environment; (d) and was of low socioeconomic status while growing up; (e) but became a bilingual

educator and was recognized as an exemplary teacher; (f) and an activist/advocate in her school, district, and community.

The following basic biographic information provides a simple sketch that fleshes out Luz's characteristics. She was the second of five children born to Mexican immigrant parents. She entered public school as a monolingual Spanish speaker and was one of the few among her high school friends who went on to college. She has taught kindergarten through third grade in the same school district for her entire 28-year professional career.

Her commitment to life-long learning and her willingness to participate in certification programs and other professional enrichment activities are impressive. She earned her National Board Teacher Certification in 2007. She also holds an Association Montessori International (AMI) certificate and a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis on bilingual education. Additionally, she has been recognized, nationally and in Texas, for her exemplary teaching by bilingual education associations.

Initially, I considered the impact of our long-term relationship on this study. As the study progressed, I realized that Luz was willing to share her personal and professional story and spend a great deal of time with me, in large measure, because of our *confianza,* the mutual trust we have developed during our decades-long relationship. As Levy & Hollan (1998) stated, "One doesn't discuss potentially reputation-threatening private worlds with someone unless one trusts him or her deeply" (p. 338). Luz knew I would protect her confidentiality by using pseudonyms for her, her school, and her school district. More importantly, our level of trust assured her that she could be open

and honest about significant personal and professional events in her life. At the end of the year, she mentioned feeling that our conversations provided her with a valuable means of reflecting on her navigation, including the resistance and subversion involved in her life experiences.

A Person-Centered Ethnographic Approach

Quiocho and Rios (2000) provided some insight into why I chose to study a MABE via an ethnographic approach:

> Ethnography is favored, we believe, because of the relatively low number of ethnic minority group teachers in the profession and in teacher education programs. The advantage is that we gain "thick, critical description" of ethnic minority group teachers' experiences in specific contexts and with concrete details, in the hopes of making visible and meaningful the complexity of what is usually not seen. (p. 494)

Specifically, a person-centered ethnography is the methodology that I eagerly employed to study the complexity of being a MABE in the context of public schools and to contribute to a body of knowledge that has historically been ignored. Further, Foley (1994) advised ethnographers to engage subjects dialogically during their encounters:

> Being dialogic with the subjects of the study has many meanings, but it generally suggests a greater intellectual openness and political and emotional vulnerability on the part of the investigator. Ethnographers drop their scientific pretensions, toss their pith helmets and imperial advantages, and close the distance between themselves and the imaginary other being studied. (p. xvii)

I embraced the dialogic process,[13] in part, because it did nothing to hinder exchanges between Luz and me, but rather enhanced them. Influenced by Wolcott's (1973) classic study focused on one male school principal, I wished to provide an account of a MABE "written by an observer who has had intimate, prolonged contact

[13] Drawing from Bakhtin, the dialogic process involves relations through interactions

with the situation, and who has . . . a broad frame of reference within which observations are placed" (p. viii). Inspired by Behar's (1993) feminist interpretation of the *historias* of Esperanza, a Mexican peddler, I gathered narratives to center Luz in my research. Ethnography was a methodology congruent with my research concerns of valuing subjectivity; translating lived experiences; allowing reflexivity; and contributing to theory and practice through a dialogic understanding of my research participant (Foley, 2002; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002).

The person-centered ethnographic approach employed in this study fit well with my research purposes and proved to be the most appropriate methodology. Person-centered ethnography, as defined by Hollan (2001), consists of "anthropological attempts to develop experience-near ways of describing and analyzing human behavior, subjective experience, and psychological processes" (p. 48). In other words, the approach primarily focuses on the "individual and on how the individual's psychological and subjective experience both shape, and are shaped by, social and cultural processes" (Hollan, 2001, p. 48). It provided me with an avenue for a narrative inquiry to discern the day-to-day human experience of an educator impacting pedagogical philosophy and practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As Hollan (2005) explained, "There are things we can learn about people by actively engaging with them, talking to them, and listening to them that we learn in no other way" (p. 465). Engaging with Luz through listening to her narratives and observing her practices fueled my passion for "bearing witness and inscribing into history those lived realities that would otherwise succumb to the alchemy of erasure" (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001). This strategy called for active

engagement with the participant through talking, listening, and observing her daily life and through relying heavily on oral life history to learn those things that cannot be learned in any other way (e.g., about the participant's family and early schooling experiences) (Hollan, 2005; Levy & Hollan, 1998).

Oral Life History

Initially, I was attracted to life history because it allowed for the linking of "the personal, the practical and the theoretical in new ways that operate at all three levels" (Goodson, 2008, p. viii). I contend that life histories "are best used . . . as an adjunct to ethnography, rather than as an alternative to it, for each lends the other a degree of rigour otherwise lacking" (Woods, 1985, p. 13). I began my research with Luz when I conducted a pilot study in 2004 and an oral history project in 2006 to collect, document, and record her life history. Consequently, this endured as an important feature of my study, although not the only aspect of this person-centered ethnography. Goodson (2008) noted that life history "allows us to concentrate on the teacher's life-world, but doing so in ways that allow us to explore political and social context and historical patterns and parameters" (p. vii).

I realized the significance and the potential pitfalls of in-depth interviewing for the purpose of obtaining a life history narrative. However, similar to Agar (1980), I viewed "the life history interview as an important type of ethnographic data. Life histories, the assumption goes, are a focal point for the individual perception of and response to broader cultural patterns" (p. 224). On the other hand, Cary (1999) cautioned against epistemological assumptions that could have framed this method and

led to "victory narratives," which were tributes characterized by uncritical and unexamined information. I did not want this study to seem as if its purpose was to glorify Luz and her work. However, by keeping a critical perspective of the micro, the "mundane of daily interactions," (Urrieta, 2009, p. 19) and the macro, the larger scale social and political situations in Luz's experiences, I utilized the method of life history as a means to pay close attention to any unexpected stories because "life history research . . . must include an aspect of the mediated, fluid, multiaspected Self" (Cary, 1999, p. 425).

I was particularly mindful of life history issues such as language and narrative structure, memory, representation, and shared authority, in that they marked the intersections of ethnicity/race, class, and gender. According to Tonkin (1992), one should consider the creation of narrative as "a dynamic process and also a situational one" (p. 51). Language is the powerful force that shapes telling and "is the primary vehicle through which past experiences are recalled and interpreted" (Etter-Lewis, 1991, p. 44). Consequently, I explored Luz's multilayered attitudes regarding Spanish and English. Etter-Lewis (1991) explained:

> The speech patterns of oral narratives provide additional information about an individual's life and perceptions. Further sociolinguistic research could reveal which variables (e.g., sex, race, social class, etc.) most influence a speaker's style preference and whether or not the experience of oppression influences narrative style. (p. 48)

Keeping in mind language and narrative structure, I also examined how Luz perceived her ability, or lack thereof, to implement additive, enriched bilingual education.

In-depth interviewing for the purpose of obtaining a life history narrative relies heavily on memories. Tonkin (1992) called for memory to be included in our attempts to

understand how people constitute themselves as social beings. This type of interviewing provides the participant with an opportunity to reflect on past experiences, although selective recall may be present in the narratives of my participant (Villenas, 2005). However, there is evidence of the stability of memory. Hoffman and Hoffman (1990) note this in their investigation of the nature of autobiographical memory of World War II experiences. In their study, they were able to corroborate historical documents with the participant's recall, which attested to the stability of the individual's memory after 40 years. They highlighted the fact that "the majority of the events in his memory claim occurred and moreover occurred pretty much as he says they did" (p. 144). The notion of memory is especially pertinent to my research because Luz often recalled events from many years ago and her memory clearly shaped her life history narrative.

Interpretations of oral narratives often address the way an individual represents aspects of self to others and to oneself. The stories can be viewed as purposeful social action because they are situated in real time and space (Tonkin, 1992), involving a teller, an audience, and a setting. When interpreting the interviews, I continually and consistently considered these notions. For example, I noted the context of the setting, the audience (the presence of myself and others), and how Luz told the story.

Another point I took into consideration when collecting Luz's life history was shared authority in the co-construction of the analysis and interpretation. I shared some of the interview transcripts with Luz to allow her to elaborate and clarify what she had said. I also shared with Luz my preliminary interpretations of the data for her comments and continued participation in the process of analyzing her narratives. (Borland,1991;

Delgado Bernal, 1998). In keeping with a Chicana feminist approach, Delgado Bernal communicated:

> A major tenet of . . . a Chicana Feminist epistemology is the inclusion of Chicana research participants in the analysis of data. This allows Chicana participants – whether they are students, parents, teachers or school administrators – to be speaking subjects who take part in production and validating knowledge. (p. 103)

Ultimately, I kept Luz in the process because my framework recognized the value of inclusion of the participant in the analysis of her own narratives. However, I unquestionably remained open to the unexpected, which was crucial to garnering insights.

I also viewed a feminist approach to oral history as important to my work. Etter-Lewis (1991) explained this approach's significance:

> Oral narrative offers a unique and provocative means of gathering information central to understanding women's lives and viewpoints. When applied to women of color, it assumes added significance as a powerful instrument for the rediscovery of womanhood so often overlooked and/or neglected in history and literature alike. (p. 42)

This particular approach was a "way of recovering the voices of suppressed groups" (Gluck & Patai, 1991, p. 9). For me, a feminist lens of oral life history provided an avenue for "generating new insights about women's experiences of themselves in their worlds" (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 11). In documenting Luz's remembering, this study allowed her recollections of what it meant to be a bilingual education teacher to be the central focus of an examination of her lived experiences. Finally, the way an interviewer listens is of the utmost importance when collecting life histories. Anderson and Jack (1991) explained, "In order to learn to listen, we need to attend more to the narrator than

to our own agendas" (p. 12). To the best of my ability, I listened carefully to Luz's narratives of growing up and her daily-lived experience as a teacher.

My Visitor's Badge: Description of the Site

In order to have access to Palomares Elementary School, where Luz taught, I needed permission from the principal and the school district. This district had a reputation for being reluctant to grant access to their schools for research purposes, and this caused me some anxiety as I pursued the process required to conduct my study. I first met with the principal, Dr. Toliver, in Spring 2007 and explained the purpose and scope of my study. Subsequently, he gave me verbal permission to conduct my investigation at the school. Finally, at the end of July 2007, the school district agreed to grant my request.

Palomares Elementary, built in 2006, serves students from prekindergarten to fifth grade. It is located in a large urban district with a student population of 80,000, of which just over 55% are Latina/o. At the time of my research, this new school was beginning its second year. Additionally, due to the Texas Academic and Knowledge Skills (TAKS)[14] scores from the spring of the previous year, their first year as a campus in a new building, the school received an academically unacceptable designation from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Since Luz had taught first grade, this designation was in no way based on her performance or that of her students. Nevertheless, the low science score of fifth grade ELLs that triggered the unacceptable designation affected all

[14] Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is the high-stakes test used by the state of Texas to rate schools, promote third, fourth, and eighth grade students to the next grade, and allow students to graduate.

teachers at all grade levels because of the resultant central office administration's close monitoring of the school. Throughout the span of our year together at Palomares, my observations of Luz occurred in her classroom (see Chapter 5 for a detailed description) and other on-site locations, including the lunchroom, the teacher lounge, the main office, and the library. I also observed Luz outside of the school site in venues that included a state board meeting, a state conference, and restaurants.

Colección: Data Collection

In my effort to gain an understanding of Luz's perspectives as a MABE in the context in which she was embedded, I employed a person-centered ethnographic approach and utilized the following methods:

1. Semi-structured interviews
2. Unstructured interviews
3. Participant observations
4. Emails and Ejournaling (email journaling)
5. Collection of photographs
6. Collection of documents
7. Collection of artifacts: Taped cassettes of interviews, media coverage of awards, certificates/awards, and newspaper articles
8. Telephone conversations

The primary strategies employed in this study were participant observations and in-depth, semi-structured interviews. A major objective of the interviews was to collect the participant's life history. Descriptive quantitative data about the school district and the school where Luz taught, including student and teacher demographics, and ELL

designations were collected to provide additional information for understanding the context of the site.

The data collected provided the foundation for this study's focus on Luz's private world and its relation to her community. In other words, the data pointed to "how people's minds and selves are affected by and, in turn, affect the culture and society of the communities in which they live" (Bernard, 1998, p. 24). I began collecting oral life history data in Spring 2004 and continued with intense participant observations in the 2007-2008 school year. My last interview with Luz was conducted in November 2008. The person-centered ethnographic approach, utilizing interviews, participant observations, descriptive demographic information, and document analysis, allowed me to triangulate the data and make certain that I could perform a careful analysis so as to answer my overarching research question: *How do a veteran Mexican American bilingual educator's cultural resources and professional experiences influence her teaching practices?*

Interviews

For the structured interview sessions, I followed the advice of Levy and Hollan (1998), who wrote, "To maximize private responses, it is essential to interview the respondent as far as possible in isolation from his or her family, friends, and acquaintances" (p. 340), in order to provide as much confidentiality as possible. Luz and I met for interviews at locations that included coffee shops, restaurants, and our respective homes. These sessions lasted from two to four hours.

Levy and Hollan (1998) explained that person-centered interviews focus on the individual's private world in relation to her or his community in order to obtain information about the participant's thoughts and feelings about what it is like to live in and be a part of a community. In this type of interviewing, questions are designed so that interviewees serve as *informants*, providing information about their community, and as *respondents*, reporting information about themselves. Person-centered interviews alternate between these two modes. According to Levy and Hollan (1998), "These oscillations between respondent and informant modes illuminate the spaces, conflicts, coherences, and transformations, if any, between the woman-in-herself (either in her own conception, or in the interviewer's emerging one) and aspects of her perception and understanding of her external context" (p. 336). Examples of questions constructed, reflecting the two modes, to elicit responses from Luz are given below:

Informant Mode Information on Community	Respondent Mode Information on Self
What were the teachers' reactions at the time of the district monitors' visit to the school?	**How did you feel at that time of the district monitors' visit to your classroom?**
How did they act at the time of the visit?	**How did you act at the time of the visit?**

Table 1. Informant and Respondent Modes

The informant questions in Table 1 were designed to obtain information from Luz about the response of the school community to the district monitors' visit. The visit had been

prompted by the school's academically unacceptable status. The respondent questions elicited Luz's individual feelings and actions pertaining to this visit.

In addition to questions, I used a probing technique to clarify Luz's relationship to her sociocultural contexts. Levy and Hollan (1998) defined a probe as "an intervention to elicit more information, not necessarily in the form of a question" (p. 337). The following are examples of levels of probing in my interviews:

Probe	Level
Tell me about your early schooling.	**More open**
Tell me about the people around you in your early schooling.	
Tell me about your elementary school teachers.	
Tell me about your first grade teacher.	
Tell me about how you were disciplined for speaking Spanish in school.	**Less open**

Table 2. Interview Probes

Levy and Hollan (1998) made the following clear to the interviewer enacting a person-centered ethnography:

> The interviews we will be centrally concerned with are not just samples of discourse – not one kind of local discourse among others, not just narratives, not just life histories or autobiographies. They are in part such things, but they are conducted in an attempt to attenuate and disrupt ordinary and conventional patterns of social discourse. In doing so, we hope to elicit behavior that moves beyond role-determined surface scripts to suggest hidden or latent dimensions of the organization of persons and of the sociocultural matrix and their interactions. (p. 334)

In our conversations and interviews over time, Luz and I operated from a pattern that "attenuat[ed] and disrupt[ed] ordinary and conventional patterns of social discourses" (p.

334). Our long-established relationship fostered openness in communication. In fact, she narrated and illuminated her awareness of the hidden sociocultural and historical aspects of the context of public school and her agency beyond role-determined surface scripts about how schooling of ELLs worked. To accomplish this disruption, my interviews were a combination of informant and respondent questions with probes, ranging from focused (closed) to open-ended.

Other important considerations for this type of interviewing included the interviewer's linguistic competence and understanding of the cultural context, as well as the participant's trust in the interviewer (Levy & Hollan, 1998). Luz is bilingual, fluent in Spanish and English. She also proved very adept at code-switching,[15] which she did frequently during our conversations. Levy and Hollan (1998) found that "linguistic nuances in the respondent's discourse that convey personal information are often meaningful variations of the standard language" (p. 337). Since I am quite comfortable with code-switching, I believe that I was able to capture these linguistic nuances. Further, I have found that code-switching among Mexican Americans enhances our connections and communication by combining the two languages, Spanish and English. According to Levy and Hollan (1998), capturing the subtle shades between private and public worlds necessitated an understanding of the cultural context. They pointed out, "It takes considerable general knowledge about a place and its people before we can begin to understand the present and significance of private variants and transformation of local

[15] Code-switching is a term that denotes speaking in a combination of Spanish and English. It is a switching competency that is a socially-situated and rule-governed phenomenon that allows "bilinguals to convey their message more precisely, more naturally, and more personally" (Becker, 1997, p. 3).

cultural and social forms" (p. 338). My past experiences (namely, as a Chicana who grew up in South Texas, a dual language teacher, a public and independent school teacher, a Montessori teacher, a dual language program evaluator, and an activist in the bilingual education community) provided me with the possibility of understanding the contextual nuances of Luz's world (Foley, 1994). Lastly, person-centered interviewing requires a great deal of trust between the interviewer and the interviewee. The *confianza* that the participant and I share has grown over two and a half decades.

My interview protocol (see Appendix A), which I developed specifically for the purpose of collecting Luz's life history, kept in mind the interplay between participant as informant and respondent; it also mapped my research questions. The protocol included Levy and Hollan's (1998) suggestions that incorporated locating information; patterns of identification and identity production; aspects of self; and moral organization and conception. Our 17 formal interview sessions, each of which lasted from two to four hours, focused on the following main topics, but were conducted flexibly to allow for probing:

TOPIC	DATE
Growing Up	October 2004 March 2006 September 2007
Schooling	October 2004 February 2006 September 2007
You and Your Work	October 2004 November 2004 April 2006 January 2008 June 2008
Teachers and Teaching	November 2004 April 2006 January 2008 June 2008
Looking Back	August 2008 November 2008

Table 3. Interview Topics

I conducted 10 hours of interviews in Spring 2004. In Spring 2006, I added to the data with six additional hours of interviews. Then, the initial interview for the school year 2007-2008 took place at the beginning of that school year. Three subsequent semi-structured interviews lasting around two hours each focused on schooling experiences, work experiences, and teaching and teachers, respectively (see Appendix B: Interview Protocol Matrix). Once a month, from September to May (excluding March), open-ended interviews covered wide-ranging topics that emerged from my participant observations. Two final interviews, in August 2008 and November 2008, encompassed the span of her career. For those two interviews, I requested that she look back over her career trajectory and divide it into phases or periods. Then, I asked her to provide an overarching name or

theme for each phase. For each time period, she noted the features making up that theme (Huberman, 1995). In total, 2007-2008 resulted in approximately 24 additional hours of interviews, for an approximate total of 40 hours with Luz. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to facilitate analysis.

In order to contextualize Luz's narratives of practice and pedagogy, I interviewed her principal, a former colleague, fellow teacher, and alumnus of Martinez Elementary. Her current principal, Dr. Toliver, provided an administrator's perspective on her teaching. I also interviewed a former colleague of Luz's, Suzana. Luz and Suzana, also a Latina, taught together for many years at Martinez Elementary School, where they became confidants and friends. Later, Suzana was Luz's principal at Hill Elementary. Ruth, a White monolingual English-speaking teacher, currently teaches with Luz and offered an 11-year view of a co-worker. Finally, I interviewed a young Latina whose sister had been a student in Luz's classroom over 10 years ago. These interviews added four hours to the 40 hours with Luz. These transcripts were also important to my analysis and for my triangulation of data.

In addition to the scheduled interviews, Luz and I had numerous informal conversations. These informal conversations differed from those scheduled ones, in that they were spontaneous and did not include formulated questions. Yet, the conversations provided an ethnographic means to verify my observations. The conversations usually pertained to events involving the students, school, or district.

For example, I had taken notes on an occasion when the district sent busses to the school as part of a presentation about bus safety. Luz took half the students in her class

to one bus, while I took the other half to another bus. Once seated with my group on our bus, the driver lectured the group about bus safety and asked questions, all in English. When returning to the room, Luz said, “What a waste of time.” I questioned her about her statement. Luz told me she had requested numerous times that the children get a bus driver for the presentation that spoke Spanish, but to no avail. She felt the district had ignored her requests and, as a consequence, disrespected the students. However, she was not going to put in any more requests for a Spanish-speaking driver for the annual bus safety talks. She said, “I give up on this one.” If I had not been there and questioned her at the moment, I would not have the data to corroborate information on how Luz negotiated amongst issues, picking and choosing her battles in an attempt to find the most effective way to serve her CLD students.

To generate records of our many informal conversations, I followed the procedure described by Valenzuela (1999) for interviews and participant observations. Citing Spradley (1980), Valenzuela stated, “This process of interviewing, recollecting interviews with a tape recorder, and typing up the conversation resulted in an ethnographic record for each interview” (p. 285). Immediately after a conversation, interview, or participant observation, I tape recorded my thoughts wherever I could find a private place, which was sometimes in my car. Usually, I would not let more than a day go by without word processing my handwritten, as well as my tape-recorded, field notes. Transcriptions of these recollections provided additional data to my written notes and verbatim recordings of interviews.

Participant Observation

I began my participant observation in at the beginning of the school year of 2007 by assisting Luz on five occasions in the crucial task of setting up a Montessori-based environment in her public school classroom for the coming academic year. It was at this time I realized that the teachers had noted my presence, and I had to explain why I was there. Luz told me that a colleague informed her that the teachers were wondering why she rated having an assistant. In order to clarify the situation, I immediately sent a note about who I was and what I was doing to all school personnel. (see Appendix E). I also sent notes in Spanish and English to the parents of the students (see Appendices F and G).

During the first month of school, I concentrated on Luz's practices, specifically the environment she prepared, lessons she taught, and classroom routines she implemented (see Appendices I and H). From September to May, I visited the classroom once a week. Most observation sessions lasted half a day. I would usually arrive and leave at a time when I would be the least obtrusive, such as at the start of school, lunch, or dismissal. Sometimes my day would start at 7:30, and other times I went to the classroom after lunch. I followed no fixed schedule, although Luz and I would tentatively set my observations two to three weeks in advance. I went on different days of the week and at different times of the day, in order "to catch the effects of time and organizational routine on interactions" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 49). I felt it was important to observe a range of activities and interactions that could only be captured with visits that took place at a variety of times and on different days throughout the year. I did not

observe in March due to Spring Break and professional conferences I had to attend. In my observations, the domains with which I was concerned were the interactions and activities (a) in the classroom, (b) in the school, (c) in the district, and (d) in the wider community.

In order to observe the processes of schooling and the context in which those processes occurred, I utilized Eisner's (1992) five dimensions in considering the ecology of a school: "the *intentional*, the *structural*, the *curricular*, the *pedagogical* and the *evaluative*" (p. 621). Although Eisner's dimensions focused on the institution, I concentrated on the individual teacher and her classroom (see Chapter 5 for more detail). The *intentional* dimension referred to aims and goals. The *structural* dimension was the organizational aspect of subjects, time, and roles. The *curricular* dimension related to content and activities taught. The *pedagogical* dimension pertained to teaching and learning practice. Lastly, the *evaluative* dimension highlighted the inclusion of assessment for student learning, processes of teaching, and quality of content. By applying the framework of the five dimensions, I captured a holistic picture of Luz's pedagogical practice within the context of public school.

From September to December, I was an active participant in Luz's classroom; everything was carried out under her direction. I gave individual lessons to students, developed instructional materials, and served as a substitute teacher. My contributions were meant to reciprocate for the many hours she had devoted to my study. Then, for the rest of the months until May, I observed more than I participated in classroom activities in order to augment my field notes. Throughout the entire school year, in addition to

observing Luz in the classroom, I observed her in myriad other settings: staff meetings, grade level meetings, school board sessions, local bilingual education association meetings, a state bilingual education conference, personal gatherings of bilingual educators, cafeteria lunches with students, faculty lunches, parent meetings, and dinners as well as happy hours with fellow bilingual educators. On average, I observed Luz once a week, generally for a five-hour period.

Having shaped the time frame of the study around a school year, I was able to draw to a close the relationships I inevitably developed with the students. The students and I experienced closure at the end-of-the-year class party with hugs and sparkly pencils as parting gifts for everyone. My relationship with Luz has continued.

Field Notes

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) discussed the wide range of views regarding field notes that exists among ethnographers. The authors stressed the common perspective that "the ethnographer writes down in regular, systematic ways what she observes and learns while participating in the daily rounds of life of others" (p. 1). Thus, I kept a three-part journal that focused on my reflections, descriptions, and interpretations. In it I noted my thoughts, emotions, and perceptions about the ongoing study, as well as questions that arose as a result of my observations. The following excerpt from my reflections early in the year exemplified this process:

> What keeps Luz going after all these years? She still has such energy and passion for teaching. Today she was picking my brain for ideas on how to set up some new language materials. It seems that even after all her years in the classroom, she searches for better ways to reach and teach her students. (Field Notes, September 20, 2007)

Descriptive notes detailed physical characteristics of the environments and the people; at the same time, interpretative notes provisionally analyzed institutional processes, as well as the events and interactions between student-teacher, teacher-teacher, administrator-teacher, parent-teacher, and parent-parent. Frequently, my field notes followed Carspecken's (1996) principles of thick description: (a) Record speech acts, body movements, and body postures; (b) Time is recorded frequently; (c) Context information is recorded; (d) A simple diagram is sketched out; and (e) Verbatim speech acts are recorded. At certain events, I felt it would have been too obtrusive to use a tape recorder; at those times, I took notes. Sometimes, it even felt intrusive to take notes, as it would have inhibited the natural flow of communication. In either of those cases, I usually wrote my observations after the events.

Documents and Photographs

I collected documents and photographs for analysis. The collection included essays the participant wrote, reflections on her educational practices, for the National Board Certification of Teachers. I also collected documentation of Luz's awards for the district, state, and national bilingual education teacher of the year. These data demonstrated her exemplary status. Additionally, I obtained a copy of the district's program of bilingual education, as well as the school's Campus Improvement Plan and parent handbook, in order to gain insight into the complexities of the context in which Luz had to navigate. To provide further documents for analysis, the participant and I dialogued by ejournal from September through May with messages about classroom observations and questions, as well as events or interactions involving student-student,

student-teacher, parent-teacher, parent-parent, teacher-teacher, or any combination thereof. This did not happen as often as I had hoped. As is the case with many busy teachers, Luz did not regularly check her email.

I requested that Luz take photos at the school and other sites to convey her daily experience as a bilingual teacher and to record visually what struck her as being important to who she was and how she taught (Ernst-Slavit & Wenger, 2006). In this way I attempted to achieve what Harper (2002) called *photo elicitation*, which combined photographs with the text of interviews. He elaborated:

> Photo elicitation is based on the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview. The difference between interviews using images and text, and interviews using words alone lies in the ways we respond to these two forms of symbolic representation. This has a physical basis: the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain's capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words. (p. 13)

For this aspect of the study, I provided Luz with a digital camera and encouraged her to take photos. My intention was to use the photos and subsequent discussions about them to see my participant's world through her eyes (Allen, Fabregas, Hankins, Hull, Labbo, Lawson et al., 2002). Unfortunately, this endeavor was not as successful as I had hoped. We abandoned the project early on because it became burdensome for her due to the many demands of her busy school day. Regardless, her stories flowed easily without the visual prompts.

Traducciones: Data Analysis

Behar (1993) spoke about taking the stories of her "informant" and "translating those conversations into a text and becoming herself, a certain kind of storyteller" (p. 14). I drew from this idea of becoming a storyteller, recounting a story that had been shared with me. According to Reissman (1993), "Narrative analysis takes as its object of investigation the story itself" (p. 1). To inform my retelling, I utilized narrative analysis for the data collected through my interviews and fieldwork. Reissman (1993) stated, "Human agency and imagination determine what gets included and excluded in narrativization, how events are plotted, and what they are supposed to mean. Individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives" (p. 2). Luz's narratives (re)created her story, and I (re)presented it. I was interested in analyzing narratives to discern how agency, "the connections between personal biography and public action," happened (Reissman, 1993, p. 34). My analysis attempted to maintain the chronological elements of Luz's life history, as well as the shape of her school year.

As Carspecken (1996) suggested, I word processed my field notes to facilitate additional commentary and the development of a coding scheme. In addition, I word processed all transcriptions of interviews. My transcriptions provided me the opportunity for a back-and-forth movement between writing about what took place and interpreting what I saw and experienced. I coded Luz's narratives, my field notes, and archival documents to search for patterns that had emerged across the data. In my initial coding, I created a topic index, which contained everything in the interview transcriptions and

field notes. Next, I grouped the topics into larger categories. I wrote these categories and the topics on index cards and organized the topic cards according to the categories. After several iterations of sorting, my themes emerged. Thus, my themes were grounded in my data collection and analysis (see Chapter 6 for discussion of themes).

Triangulation

Triangulation supported the validity of my findings, as the study employed multiple sources to add to the rigor of my research (Robson, 2000) and demonstrated that the findings were "really" about what they appeared to be about (Robson, 2000, p.174). By using multiple data sources and methods, triangulation established the trustworthiness of the findings (Mertens, 1998).

Triangulation	
Multiple Methods	**Multiple Sources of Data**
Interviews	Semi-structured interviews face-to-face Semi-structured interviews by telephone Informal interviews Photo elicitation interviews
Participant Observations	Classroom observations School observations School district observations Community observations
Document Review	Ejournal entries Emails Field notes Participant's essays Media coverage of awards Certificates/awards Newspaper articles District's Bilingual Education Model Cuban's (2008) Report on District Reform

Table 4. Triangulation of Data

Interview transcriptions, ejournal entries, emails, and documents that included Luz's essays on her teaching practice and pedagogy, as well as field notes collected from participant observation provided triangulation for the data.

Throughout the process of analysis, I relied on what Delgado Bernal (1998) called *cultural intuition*. Her concept of cultural intuition drew from the concept of "theoretical sensitivity" that "comes from four major sources: one's personal experience, the existing literature, one's professional experience, and the analytical research process itself" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, cited in Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 563). Delgado Bernal extended theoretical sensitivity to her definition of cultural intuition by including collective experience, community memory, and participant engagement in the analysis of data. She maintained that "implicit knowledge helps us understand events, actions, and words, and to do so more confidently than if one did not bring these particular life experiences into the research" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 564). The idea of implicit knowledge formed through life experiences led Delgado Bernal to argue, "As many feminists contend, the researcher is a subject in her research and her personal history is part of the analytical process" (p. 564). To help me understand and analyze my data, I drew from my cultural intuition and utilized the knowledge garnered from my life experiences as a Chicana growing up and being schooled in south Texas.

My life experiences have included, and have been shaped by, collective memory passed on to me through family stories, *consejos* (advice), and *testimonios.*[16] In these ways I learned about school segregation in Texas, punishment for speaking Spanish, and Jim Crow-type laws imposed on Mexicans in Texas. My sensitivity to the issues confronting Luz was heightened by my readings of existing literature on the schooling of

[16] Stories told by a subaltern person with urgency to communicate events of discrimination, oppression, and social injustice (Latina Feminsit Group, 2001).

Mexican Americans, the social-historical aspects of bilingual education, and Chicana feminist theories and pedagogies. My professional involvement in bilingual education has included serving as a dual language Montessori teacher, a program consultant, and a program evaluator. These experiences have given me insight into the macro and micro aspects of bilingual education and have contributed to my cultural intuition as a researcher.

The data I gathered from Luz's narratives and my own embeddedness in the context allowed me to identify and analyze the multiple voices that Luz has orchestrated in order to navigate and negotiate all that being a Latina teacher in bilingual education has entailed. In this dialogic process, she was constantly "addressed" and in the process of "answering" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 169). She has authored her story, which has been situated within certain sociocultural and historical parameters. For this self-authoring to have happened, Luz needed to draw "upon the languages, the dialects, the words of others to which she has been exposed" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 170). The same could also be said about my retelling of Luz's story. The next two chapters aim to retell Luz's story, drawing from the past-present context in which she was embedded, her life history, and the shape of one school year that occurred in the ending phase of her teaching career.

In this person-centered ethnography, I analyzed narratives and classroom practices to discover what an exemplary MABE brought to the table – that is, to her teaching and learning, with respect to ways of knowing and funds of knowledge. Chicana feminist thought and pedagogies allowed for interpretations and insights into the

complexities involved in ethnic identity production and the shaping of a professional identity. This perspective placed Chicanas at the center of study "to recover untold stories" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 87). To frame my research on identity production and agency in this manner opened a window on what it meant to be teaching and learning when a teacher was juxtaposed between additive and subtractive bilingual education models, as well as between two languages. Luz has been caught in a contradictory space, ideologically additive but part of a system that is subtractive (Valenzuela, 1999).

Drawing from the idea that story and identity are inextricably linked, narrative can serve both as a phenomenon and as a methodological tool to examine teacher identity production and knowledge creation. Thus, those dual aspects of narrative provided insight into how implicit and explicit cultural values impact and guide a teacher's identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; Galindo & Olguín, 1996; Ochoa, 2007). Consequently, story and storytelling supplied a fluid, dynamic opportunity that preserved the participant's perspectives. The process enabled me to intertwine Luz's narratives of her multiple identities as daughter, public school teacher, dual language Montessori teacher, bilingual education consultant, and Chicana activist.

Insider/Outsider

My positionality as a Chicana educator prompted me to consider the complexities and dilemmas that an insider/native researcher faces (Cerroni-Long, 1995). Gailey (1998) touched upon this in her work:

> The researcher might consider that because there is a 'match' with informants in one or two dimensions there is privileged access or understanding. But other dimensions could be more important to the subjects of research, possibly alienating them from the researcher who is unable or unwilling to recognize these other dimensions. (p. 215)

As a native researcher who has shared familiarity and lived experiences with her participant, I have acknowledged the challenges, dilemmas, and ambiguities present in being an insider. However, I could not jump too quickly to the conclusion that I was an insider in the many different situations this research has involved. Villenas' (1996) cautionary tale about the native researcher as colonizer or colonized served as a reminder about conflicting identities; these could position a researcher, depending on the situation, either as an insider or as an outsider, through privilege as well as marginalization. Narayan (1993) argued "against the fixity of a distinction between 'native' and 'non-native'" (p. 671). As an alternative to a dichotomous paradigm concerning the researcher/researched, insider/outsider, and observer/observed, she suggested "that at this historical moment we might more profitably view each anthropologist in terms of shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations" (p. 671).

Throughout this study, I experienced the shifting of my identities depending on the situation. I felt at times that I could blend into a group, such as the Salsa Sisters, an informal group of bilingual education teachers. At other times, for example, at a grade level meeting, I felt completely outside the group. Likewise, Luz narrated shifts in her own identity with respect to power, privilege, and position, which informed my analysis. As Narayan pointed out, "By situating ourselves as subjects simultaneously touched by

life-experience and swayed by professional concerns, we can acknowledge the hybrid and positioned nature of our identities" (p. 682). Hence, my rejection of the insider/outsider dichotomy has reflected my embrace of a fluid research process that was situational and inflected by differing constellations of power and privilege (Villenas, 1996).

I closely matched Luz in some dimensions arising from the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, gender discrimination, and class struggles, which allowed me an ease of access and the basis for a certain amount of trust. However, I realized it was along a continuum of insider/outsider that I operated during this investigation. Due to our respective conditions of living, we have differently navigated our paths through the issues of race/ethnicity, class, language, and gender. Throughout the investigation and analysis, the dilemmas I faced dealt with my position as a researcher and my relationship with Luz. As Villenas (1996) noted, "Recognizing our multidimensional identities as colonizers, colonized, neither, and in-between, we *camaradas* in struggle must work from within and facilitate a process where Latinas/os become the subjects and the creators of knowledge" (p. 730). In this study, I needed to remain diligent so as not to impose my preconceived notions and so I would remain aware of biases that could take me down misleading alleyways of victory narratives (Cary, 1999). Throughout my analysis, I have kept in mind that an appealing thesis must be abandoned if it cannot be justified by the data. Embracing uncertainty has helped me avoid a distortion of Luz's realities by remaining open to disruptions. Ultimately, I sought to be true to my voice and Luz's story.

Trustworthiness of Research and Member Checking

The credibility of my research was enhanced by the substantial amount of time I have spent engaged in observing and interviewing Luz. Further, I made use of the strategy of peer debriefing, in which data were audited for dependability and confirmability. According to Mertens (1998), it is up to the reader to "determine the degree of similarity between the study site and the receiving context" (p. 183). I bolstered transferability by providing "extensive and careful description of the time, place, context, and culture" (Mertens, 1998, p. 183). Regarding authenticity and emancipatory possibility, I agree with Gailey (1998), who viewed research as never politically neutral and objectivity as impossible since we are cultural beings. Nevertheless, she ascertained that bias could be avoided or at least reduced to the extent that researchers made explicit their assumptions and beliefs. She highlighted, "Cross-checking for bias, for feminist anthropologists, lies in reflexivity, in critically examining the links that we make or do not make between our assumptions, how our research is designed and conducted, and the conclusions we draw" (p. 206). My reflexivity and Luz's willingness to member check portions of interview transcripts and some of my accompanying analysis were important aspects of her telling and my listening (Delgado Bernal, 1998). Luz helped me (re)construct both her life story and her school story, for what turned out to be an emotional and difficult school year that I documented through data with methods that resulted in thick descriptions of her ways of being, becoming, and belonging in the world of bilingual education in the public schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

LA HISTORIADORA

I was going to my first interview with Luz. Although it was a Saturday, Luz had a full day at school. We were to meet in her classroom after she was finished with parent conferences. As I walked down the darkened halls of Pecan Elementary, my attention was drawn to a large, lighted display case. I peered through the glass and saw pictures of the old Pecan Elementary, 100 years ago. Its façade brought memories rushing back to me. As I looked closely at the old class pictures, I noticed there was not anyone of color among the children or teachers. When I had done my student teacher observations at Pecan in the 1970s, the demographics of the school had already changed. At that time, the students were mostly Latina/o, yet all the teachers were still Anglo. Now, that "old" Pecan is no longer a school, but a renovated office building. Luz was teaching at the "new" Pecan. That Saturday, my first interview with Luz united the experiences and memories of the old Pecan with the new Pecan. My notes from that first interview captured my impressions:

> The front door is propped open a bit. I enter the dark and deserted building. Without the bustle of activity of students and staff, it seems lonely. In the gloom of the hallway, I am drawn to some lighted cases that display photographs, class pictures, from 100 years ago. All of a sudden, it dawned on me that this school is connected historically to the school where I did my student teacher observations. The physical structure is new, but I wonder if anything else has changed since I was at the old Pecan. I walk down the darkened halls and see light spilling out of an open classroom door. Here is another connection with Luz. I marvel at this and enter Luz's classroom to start our interview. (Notes, October 9, 2004)

Beginning with this first meeting with Luz, I have placed particular emphasis on her narrative accounts of schooling and teaching experiences to augment the research on

bilingual education classroom teachers. Luz's storytelling provided a means to record the phenomenon of a MABE's trajectory from early schooling to 28th year of teaching, as well as explore how she views both herself, as she goes about the task of educating ELLs, and the social/historical context in which she is embedded.

Although bilingual education teachers' narratives have seldom been considered or documented for the purpose of examining identity and agency, identity making will become better understood through Luz's narratives of personal and professional experiences. A close look at Luz's identity making could play a central role in understanding the process of identity production for preservice and inservice bilingual education teachers. Furthermore, examining the heuristic identity development of this particular experienced Mexican American bilingual education teacher can provide valuable lessons for all involved in this field because she has served as a witness to and participant in the inception and ongoing implementation of modern bilingual education.

Luz told stories about her love for the Spanish language, the high expectations she has held for all of her students to become successful learners, her belief in offering an additive, enriched education that teaches the whole child, and the effectiveness of the Montessori method in helping Latina/o students reach these goals. She talked about her experiences of resistance, resilience, and triumph that led her to acquire a Master's degree in bilingual education, a Montessori teaching certificate, and a National Board teacher certification. Some of her stories recounted times of celebration, for example, the recognition she received when she was named State and National Bilingual Teacher of

the Year. Upon close examination, her storytelling also revealed issues of conflict and marginalization.

The Storyteller

Through her storytelling, Luz connects with a history specific to Mexican Americans in education (San Miguel, 1987; Valencia, 2008). In her narratives, continuity and connection display a sense of who she is, a conclusion at which she arrives through much reflection as well as trial and error; this process of self-discovery can be seen as a feedback loop, as explained in Chapter 2. In order to convey the rich portraiture of her narratives and weave the stories together, I requested that she think about her professional life in phases. Additionally, I requested that she give each phase a name or theme, and note features, which characterized that theme (Huberman, 1995). This provided the frame for sharing her stories. My chronological retelling reveals Luz's wealth of experience as a Latina, a teacher, and a Texan. With the exception of the first subsection, her exact words are used as the titles of the subsections.

As I stated in Chapter 2, there is a scarcity of first-person narratives from Latina teachers. The lack becomes even more apparent when the focus is narrowed to those of Mexican American bilingual education teachers in Texas. In listening to and documenting Luz's narratives, I did not attempt to "give her a voice." Rather, I offered a space for her stories here and within the larger landscape of bilingual education. I have called her *la historiadora* because she has served as a witness and a link to the turbulent, conflictual enterprise of modern bilingual education. As such, I have expanded the term

beyond its literal translation and conventional definition to mean a person who lives history, recounts it, reflects on it, and effects it.

Beginnings: I Remember, I Remember

According to Jenlink (2006), experiences play a role in the continual creation of oneself and interact with other aspects of one's development, such as social, cultural, relational, and biographical. Jenlink addressed this idea by using a palimpsest as a metaphor for identity shaping. He defined the word palimpsest as,

> a parchment or other piece of writing material from which one writing had been erased to make room for another, often leaving the first faintly visible, a process to which many ancient manuscripts were subjected. Often, the erasing was not altogether successful, and the original writing showed through. (p. 129)

Monks commonly practiced this technique during the Middle Ages in the scriptoriums of monasteries. Jenlink clarified, "Just as the palimpsest retains everything written onto it from the past, even if the legibility of its inscriptions diminishes with more and more overwriting, so too does the teacher's identity retain past experiences" (p. 121). Luz's description of growing up in a Texas border town as a child of recent Mexican immigrants exemplified the idea of retaining experiences despite "overwriting."

> I was born in Bordertown, Texas. It's southwest of San Antonio. Both my parents are from México. Well, actually my father was born in the United States, but was raised in México. His parents had come to the United States as farm workers. Then, they decided to go back to Mexico. So he was born here. His two siblings were born in Mexico–one younger and one older. He ended up coming back to the United States when he was young. He wanted to join the Army. He had plans for himself. He just felt that he needed to do more for himself. He met my mom in México in a Mexican border town, right next to Bordertown. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz established herself as a second-generation Latina in this narrative. She went on to explain her family's economic situation.

> We were kind of poor. My dad was a mechanic, had just come from the Army. They educated him as a mechanic. And then he had a little shop right outside our house. So that's how he did things. I was from a low socio-economic household. I remember getting - I look back on it - we would get these boxes of food for Christmas. I guess people would see us and think, "They need it." And we did need it. We did need it. I remember getting these real fancy little hats. You know how they just put stuff in there. Some things were very useless. I mean they were not things we would be able to use for school. So I remember that. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz's parents instilled a deep regard for education in their children. She remembers her parents using their own limited economic opportunities as a living example to emphasize why education was not just an option for Luz and her siblings, but an imperative. Although her mother and father did not have the formal education that would have helped them sit down with their children to explain homework problems, they were nonetheless their children's first, and most important, educators. Luz remembered:

> That's another thing my dad taught us. It must have been between our junior and senior year, maybe before then. But two summers in a row, he had us go one week to go to the field to piscar, to take the silk from the corn. We had to go do that and we had to go pick pepinos (cucumbers). I think we went to Batesville or Carrizo. Right there near to Bordertown. We had to get up real early. Oh, we hated the sun. See, he had been a farm worker before he joined the Army. He said, "I don't want you to have to do that. Even though we don't have a good house and even if we don't have this and that." He said, "You better go and see what it's like." And it was hard! The rows looked so far. It was horrible we had to get up at four in the morning to travel. So he taught us a lesson. And that's how we learned to go to college. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Despite having neither the means nor the experience to help Luz in the traditional ways that mainstream public schools expect, her parents were able to impart the value of education. They demonstrated their ability to provide *educación* and encouraged her pursuit of education.

Although cognates, the English word "education" and the Spanish word *educación* embody noteworthy differences (Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999; Villenas, 1996). In English, education tends to refer to formal schooling. Although formal schooling is a part of *educación*, the Spanish term means more than that. Valenzuela (1999) explained, "It refers to the family's role of inculcating in children a sense of moral, social, and personal responsibility and serves as the foundation for all other learning" (p. 23). It involves responsibility and respect, as well as the children's behavior as a reflection on the honor of the family in the community. Luz's family valued formal education, one key component of *educación*, and she received *consejos* (advice) from her parents about the importance of pursuing this education. However, there was another aspect to being educated that was important to the family: the cultural concept of *ser bien educado* (to be well educated). Luz related:

> My parents always told us that the teacher is an important person and you know, they kind of instilled in us that you needed to respect and so we were always real good kids. (Interview, October 9, 2004)

The cultural aspect of *ser bien educado* does not preclude an emphasis on formal schooling. Although her parents did not attain a level of education that could help her through the complicated maze of high school and college, they gave her direction based on their experiences.

> Now my parents did encourage me. My dad was always real, "Don't depend on men," "You have to have your own career," "Education is real important," "You don't have to owe anybody anything once you have your education." And my mom . . . both. . . . My mom and dad were both the same way. So we all graduated from high school. And my mom looks back and says, "Wow, I'm glad everybody graduated from high school." (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz's feelings about having started school as a monolingual Spanish speaker in an all-English classrooms form an essential part of her history. While she related a very positive attitude about speaking Spanish, the complicated negotiation of language boundaries between home and school clearly affected her.

> When I started school, I remember loving school. I remember loving school. I didn't want to be absent and I didn't want to be late. And I remember having perfect attendance for so many years. But I remember in first grade being scared. We didn't have kindergarten. It was like my silent period was long. I don't remember when I started talking in first grade. Yes, I was speaking only Spanish when I went to school. It seems like I must have known a little English because my dad spoke English because he had gone to the Army and my older sister had been in school one year. So I remember there was a little bit of English. But I don't remember feeling comfortable with it. I don't remember feeling good about it. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Her early school experiences became part of what she credits for shaping her professional identity as a bilingual education teacher.

> I have interesting memories of my childhood. I mean, there were some good times. But mainly, I think what helps me be a good bilingual teacher is that I had interesting situations that happened to me when I was little. I remember very clearly, and I think the reason I remember clearly is because some of them were traumatic. Especially, I remember going into an all-English classroom. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

She described her initial experiences in an all-English classroom as strange and frightening and especially remembers her silence.

> The experiences were like I told you earlier in my life as a child going into a classroom where I had to speak, where I had to listen and listen carefully because I couldn't understand the language. I remember that I felt strange, you know. I remember when I was in the classroom; I remember just being real quiet. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

On the other hand, positive experiences with language have also influenced her identity.

> I learned to love Spanish. That was one thing my mom and I have in common. She and I loved Spanish poetry. I loved things I heard on the radio. Also what happened when we were little, we didn't have books. So my mom would put us to sleep by singing to us in Spanish or telling us all those little stories. So she'd say it all in Spanish. Everything was always all in Spanish. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Although Luz experienced the devaluing of her first language during her early school years, her rich home experiences with Spanish allowed her to continue to appreciate and develop her mother tongue. The love of the Spanish language that she embraced in early childhood allowed her to remain close to her mother and easily navigate her community.

> In my neighborhood, I remember communicating in Spanish. But I remember, I think we were bilingual. We mostly spoke Spanish. I don't remember speaking that much English at home. Like I was saying that my mom recited poems to us, sang to us, and everything in Spanish. I loved Spanish. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Her strong linguistic base combined with positive home experiences fortified her resistance to the subtraction of her first language, although her schooling was through what has become known as English submersion. In spite of these academic hurdles, Luz found a role model in high school who planted within her the idea of becoming a Spanish teacher.

> So what ended up happening is that I was always ahead in Spanish. I took a placement test in high school and I placed into the highest levels of Spanish. So I was able to . . . I was in high school with juniors and seniors when I was a sophomore, and so I got to read a lot of the beautiful literature in Spanish. And I remember having a teacher there from Bordertown, who was originally from Bordertown, who had been to Spain, and who had been - I don't know - who had been all over the world, to - I don't know - Venezuela because she was married to a Venezolano. And so, I remember her impressing me. So I used to think, I want

> to be like her. And I remember sitting there in her class thinking that. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz never had the opportunity to be a student in a bilingual education classroom. For her, the process of schooling was inherently unfair, in that the curriculum, as well as most of her teachers, devalued her language and culture (Valenzuela, 1999). As Luz points out,

> middle school . . . I remember noticing right away that I was in a section where I shouldn't have been, and it was unfair. And I guess that was when I first started thinking that if I had gotten instruction in Spanish – I don't remember thinking that then, but I remember now that I always thought it was unfair. Because when I got to junior high they put us in sections, and I was in one of the lowest. I was in section 15 or something. I think there was something like 16 sections. I think what happened is that they gave us a test – it must have been at the end of sixth grade – a standardized test that I didn't pass. I'm thinking because I ended up being in one of the lowest. I remember thinking that's so unfair. I remember being really upset. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

> And I remember being, like, not a slow reader, but I always needed help in reading. And I remember getting to seventh grade and they put me in this course where they were going to help me, and I remember getting help. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

> I was that type of child that I always thought if they give me something to help me, then I can do it. I always thought that had they given me instruction in Spanish, I would have done better. And I really felt that that was something. As I grew up, I guess through high school, thinking that's unfair that they gave me a test and I didn't pass. You know, I remember feeling that way. I didn't remember knowing, understanding so much of that. Now, as a teacher, I know what happened. I know it was unfair, but that was too bad; it was all done in English. So I didn't have any other choice. But what I did notice was that my friends were not doing as well as I was – some of my other friends that were similar to my background as far as being bilingual, Spanish being their first language. I didn't like that because it was obvious to me that the ones that were up at the top sections were the ones that were the more English speakers. So that was obvious to me too. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz reflected an early awareness of how she and those around her were positioned by language. This could have led to embracing an English-only attitude, yet this did not happen. The conflicts she experienced contributed to her commitment to bilingual education. The hegemony of English (Shannon, 1995) plus the subtractive curriculum drove some minority students, and some who eventually became teachers, to adopt the values of the educational system they had experienced. Luz remembers her first Latino teacher, who exemplified this mentality. Although Luz grew up in a predominantly *Mexicano* community, she had mostly Anglo teachers and did not have a Latino teacher until the sixth grade.

> I don't think the Anglo teachers were ever too patronizing. I don't remember feeling that way. I don't remember feeling that at all until I went to sixth grade when I had a Mexicano teacher. He started saying, "OK, no speaking Spanish. You're going to be charged a penny per word." I don't remember anything like that ever happening to us before. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

On the other hand, Luz remembers being encouraged by some of her Anglo teachers. One teacher in particular encouraged her to prepare for college and pushed her to take the courses required in high school in order to go to college.

> I remember, and I loved Mr. Woods, gringito, chaparrito (Anglo, short). I remember him saying, "Luz, you're doing very well. We need to be moving you. You need to be going into Algebra." As a matter of fact, he suggested that I go the following year. I guess it must have been eighth grade because in ninth grade he did recommend me to go to Algebra, which I was really not prepared to do because I did not have the background that all these people who had been in the upper sections had. Also, I remember thinking, see, I didn't have my parents to help me here with these things. Somehow I felt like I needed to do that. By ninth grade, I already knew that I wanted to go to college. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz started thinking about college either at the end of eighth grade or the beginning of ninth grade; she acknowledges Mr. Woods and his support as one of the main reasons she began to think this way at this time.

> I remember thinking maybe that's what I should do. I remember thinking in my mind, organizing how I was going, because I remember thinking, OK, starting in ninth grade, I have to be in clubs. I had gone - there was a counselor across the street in the high school - and I had gone to get information. I remember I was real young when I did this. I remember thinking I need to start thinking about going to college. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Mentoring by another teacher continued in high school:

> But you see in high school, this teacher that I knew that I really admired, who later I kept in touch with because I used to babysit for him. He was my teacher in high school for history. He was Anglo. His wife, they had a baby when I was a freshman or sophomore. And I would babysit for them. So they kind of encouraged me a lot too because they had gone to college and, of course, both of them were teachers. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz was the first one in her family to attend a four-year university. She connected this not to her own personal achievement, but rather to a desire to be a model for her siblings, reflect her sense of *responsibilidad* (responsibility to family and community).

> I was the first one to go off to a four-year college. I remember I think I did impress my younger brothers and sisters. And I did take that step, but I remember thinking that that was important to me. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Against formidable odds, Luz not only attended, but also graduated from college. It is documented that only 7 out of 100 Latinas/os make it from elementary school through the educational pipeline to college graduation (Yosso, 2006).

When Luz left home to begin college in the northern part of Texas, support from her social networks were critical. Networks and reciprocity are interwoven in the fabric

of her stories of early personal experiences. Funds of knowledge and encouragement from mentors guided her to the next phase of her trajectory.

Finding Myself as a Chicana

Luz attended high school and university at a particularly significant historical time and space in Texas. It was a time of major societal flux: the Chicano Civil Rights *Movimiento* and *El Partido de la Raza Unida* (The Raza Unida Party).[17] Change was in the very air that she was breathing. Luz recounts:

> I know I go back and forth between "Chicana" and "Mexicana" and all that. Back home, when we were in high school, we heard of La Raza Unida in Cristal (Crystal City). We experienced them coming to the football field in the marching band and putting their arm and fist out, showing their brown power. I remember even then my parents and the Mexicano community were very negative towards that. I remember questioning my parents, going home and asking, "What is this? I don't understand what's going on. Will you explain to me?" They wanted us to not get involved, even though it was my culture. I look back and I think I needed more information. I think I would have joined La Raza Unida back then, you know? I had so many questions, but I didn't get the answers that I wish I had gotten. I was in high school and I was concerned and I was curious. And they downplayed it. In my hometown, people were not as outspoken about their culture and language. They just didn't want to have anything to do with La Raza Unida. They wanted to be like Americans. They felt that it was a disgrace to our culture and our people, those Chicanos, because it was very radical. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Blauner (1987) pointed out "a basic distinction between immigration and colonization as the two major processes through which new population groups are incorporated into a nation" (p. 149). It can be argued that people of Mexican descent are a colonized people in the U.S. (Blauner, 1987; Trujillo, 1998). Blauner listed three conditions of a colonized situation: (1) forced entry into the larger society; (2) subjection to various forms of

[17] *El Partido de la Raza Unida* was the first U.S. political party to be formed around ethnic concerns and membership. It was established in 1970 in Crystal City, Texas.

unfree labor; and (3) the cultural policy of the colonizer that constrains, transforms, or destroys original values, orientations, and ways of life. Mexican Americans in Luz's hometown, established as a settlement in 1849, experienced colonizing conditions with the Mexican American War (1846-1848) and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), the effects of which – deculturalization, political discrimination, economic oppression, and educational segregation (Grinberg & Saavedra, 2000; Trujillo, 1998) – continued into Luz's lifetime. At university, Luz was faced with the colonized mentality of her family and community colliding with her awakening *consciencia* (consciousness).

> When I learned and studied and read what Chicanismo was to some people and what it meant to others, I was really proud that there had been some working on empowering themselves. I liked the fact that some people had stood up for their rights and for their jobs and for different things and for their education. I remember when we started reading a lot about Raza Unida in the cultural courses at the university. It just opened up my mind. That's what made me realize that I was so proud to be part of the Mexicano, Chicano, you know, that trend. I was so glad to be part of the culture. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Although not directly involved in the politics of the *Movimiento*, she was impacted by it. That influence, combined with experiences at North State University, further forged her narratives about the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, language, class, and gender.

> I experienced discrimination for the first time during those years because I had come from a small town where everyone, everyone was Mexicano. There were a few Anglos in my hometown. It wasn't until I went to the university that I felt what discrimination was and I, you know, I experienced some of those, ahhh, situations. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Luz remembered, in her growing-up years, being surrounded by a community of those who were similar to her and also spoke like her. In school, the majority of her classmates

were Latina/o, but most of her teachers were white. Although she did feel that her early schooling had been traumatic and sometimes unfair, she was not aware of overt discrimination until she began attending North State University.

> OK, I knew when I first went to the university I didn't feel the discrimination right off the bat because what happened was that they had me staying in a dorm where it was just African American students and Mexicana students. So it wasn't that obvious in that dorm. Where it was obvious was in the classes where there were Anglo students. And this was like in all the education courses, not the bilingual education courses because obviously we were more Chicanas than Anglos in those courses. But the ones where there were Anglo students, where it was more general education, those preparation courses. Those were the courses like Art for the Elementary Teacher, Music for the Elementary Teacher, Curriculum and Instruction for Elementary Teachers. I experienced walking into the class, sitting in a seat, and some people getting up and moving because they were sitting next to me. I guess I didn't think anything of it until it was obvious to me that that was why they were moving - because I was a Mexicana. You know what I mean? So those kinds of things started making me aware. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

At first she was unaware that she lived in an intentionally segregated, female dorm. She felt comfortable there. Later, she realized that they were segregated because of the color of their skin and their socio-economic status.

> And, of course, that was kind of negative, but on the positive side, I had always heard and experienced from watching TV and hearing people back home – because there were no African Americans – I had always heard that they were bad people. The descriptors of a Black person were totally different. So the positive part of being at the university and experiencing all of this, living with African American girls, was it wasn't true that they were this and they were that. All the negative things that I had heard of them, I was able to – uhh, what is it? – put aside because it wasn't true and experience the friendliness. I got to meet Black girls and they were so wonderful and we got to be friends and I got to learn about their culture. You know, so I got to experience THAT. So all of that, the first years before teaching prepared me for what I was going to experience later on when I started teaching, and I had to deal with integration and other major issues in our school district. That prepared me for that and helped me understand that certain misconceptions about cultures and peoples are not always true. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Luz had certain assumptions and beliefs regarding African Americans that came from the media and lack of exposure to Blacks in her predominantly Latina/o community. But the feedback loop of experiences and knowledge led her to examine the ideological issues concerning African Americans. Now she applies this *conocimiento* (knowledge) to her teaching practice to question certain understandings and expectations imposed on groups of students and their parents.

> Even on television, you know, we used to watch where the Blacks were the ones getting in trouble, and it's so different when you're in the classroom and you experience the children, and you see that they want to learn, and you see that they have a lot to offer, and they are intelligent, and you get to see that it's not true. They have a lot of potential. They have a lot of intelligence. And I'm not talking just about African Americans; I'm talking about the Chicanos, too. Because, you know, those are the ones I ended up teaching. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

> So I learned a lot that first year. Well, what really helped me understand those, I guess, misconceptions and the misunderstandings about minorities made me realize later on that those were the things that were being said about Mexicanos, and about the children, and about Blacks. You know what I mean. I guess I was more open-minded knowing that certain things are not true. I was more open-minded. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Her university years shaped her professional identity. These pre-career, daily, lived experiences uniquely situated her to reflect on events as they were happening, as well as those events which had occurred as she was growing up.

> In college I realized that I didn't know of things about my culture that I felt I should have been taught in high school, and I was disappointed because having come from an all Mexicano community, I was real disappointed that my Mexicano teachers – there were not too many, but the ones that were there – were not – what is it? – they did not give us the information that I feel I should have had then. You know? The majority were Anglo teachers, so I understood that, but there were also . . . there must have been, like, at every grade level – seventh grade, eighth grade, there were Mexicanos there, but I'm disappointed that they were not the Mexicanos to be promoting their culture and their language. You

> know? So I was real disappointed in that when I learned that in college. I wish I had gotten into it earlier. (August 8, 2008)

Luz recognizes that her Latina/o teachers, few that they were, did not incorporate their funds of knowledge, their students' background knowledge, or the historical contributions of Mexicanos in their classrooms. Reflecting on this omission by her Latina/o teachers led to her general disappointment in the status quo of the classroom and made her realize that she wanted to do things differently.

She began her time at college with plans to be a Spanish teacher. She recalls a Latina instructor who taught her Spanish in high school and inspired her to follow the same path. While in college, Luz sought out and encountered positive experiences in Spanish.

> The thing is that I loved Spanish. I took lots of courses in Spanish. So I got to be with, like, Dr. Garcia who recites beautiful poetry. That's how he does his class, and then you have to recite them. It was real neat. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Initially, she was not aware that becoming a bilingual education teacher was an option for her. Programs for and university departments of bilingual education were just commencing in the early 1970s. Again, as Luz has shared often happens to her at critical moments in her life, a mentorship experience led her to switch to bilingual education as her major.

> What was good for me at the university is that my major was going to be Spanish, but when I got to the courses and I started taking courses with people in the bilingual department, and when my advisor was Rudolfo Ramirez, then, he started saying, "OK, Luz, why do you want to do this and this?" Which was bilingual and Spanish. And I remember thinking, "Hmmmmmm." I remember getting involved right away when I started realizing, "Oh, I bet I could do bilingual education." I have that to offer the children since I was real strong in Spanish. (October 12, 2004)

> It was almost like it was meant to be. I felt real strong in Spanish and I felt like I can give them everything I took, like my reading courses for elementary and bilingual. I remember thinking, I'm so strong in Spanish, I know I can do it. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz committed to bilingual education during its very first phase of academic development and institutionalization in the 1970s. The transformative experiences offered by the historical moment of modern bilingual education's inception, her preservice teacher events, daily-lived experiences, and cultural resources provided the impetus for her decision to be a bilingual education teacher. This choice connected her past with her present situation and pointed to a future filled with possibility and hope.

Luz's college days also coincided with the availability of federal monies to help pursue higher education. Mexican Americans now had access to higher education in numbers not previously possible. Some of these funds were designated for the training of bilingual education teachers. Luz talked about the *Beca* (scholarship) group that she connected with eventually. Unfortunately, she was unable to take advantage of the funding opportunities because she had not learned about them soon enough to meet the application deadlines.

> They had a group there called the Beca that were on scholarships. I didn't know such – see that was the other thing I didn't know because I was the first person going to a four-year college. I could have had - I mean, I had scholarships like from the VFW, little, small $500 scholarships, but I didn't know about the other ones, the ones you could pay off by working in a low-socio economic campus when you got out. So I didn't know anything about that. I always had a job when I was in college. I didn't know that you could have your loans paid off once you came out anyway. I didn't know that. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Lack of information about the higher education application process in general, and financial matters in particular, still impede many minority students. Some never begin the process of seriously investigating and applying to college because it seems financially impossible. Although Luz encountered a certain amount of this information, which helped her with college expenses, she still lacked crucial, specific details that may have precluded her from having to work and, thus, enabled her to focus more on her studies. Nevertheless, she was able to connect with the *Beca* group and was grateful for that. Even though she did not have that scholarship, the group took her in as one of its own. This was especially helpful when she had to travel 80 miles round trip to the district where she was assigned her student teaching in a bilingual education classroom: the *Beca* students traveled together in a van provided by the bilingual education department at the university.

> That was another thing that helped. Once I got into the bilingual program, I was treated like a Beca. I could go with them in the van to go student teach, which was good for me because I didn't have to stay in the university town to do student teaching because there was no bilingual education there at that time. There was not anything that was formal. I remember being displeased with that because there was no place to go and observe. I remember still going and doing some observations but not anything for bilingual education, just for regular education. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

She recalled her student teaching experience in a bilingual classroom:

> My experience as a student teacher was kind of good. It so happened that the second day I was there, the teacher was sick and they couldn't get a sub. So I just practically took the class the rest of the week, and it was like I was a teacher! You know, it was real interesting, she was a good, cooperating teacher, but she was an Anglo and hardly knew any Spanish. So it was like I was the bilingual teacher. You know what I mean. It was real interesting. She was a bilingual teacher, real beautiful, young, maybe 26. I remember thinking that there was a lot more English instruction from her, but the children needed to be given a lot

> more Spanish because they were limited English speakers. But she spoke to them in English, but the worksheets and things were in Spanish. But that's when I started thinking I don't remember her speaking hardly any Spanish. I mean, I don't remember her speaking Spanish. I think she was impressed because I did do a lot of the Spanish instruction. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

In the early years, bilingual education was a struggling enterprise. Some teachers whose Spanish proficiency was minimal were recruited. In the early implementation of bilingual education programs, teachers were only required to have knowledge of 700 words of Spanish and 100 hours of workshops to become bilingually certified.[18] It was during this phase of bilingual education that Luz began her professional life with her high proficiency in Spanish and bilingual teaching certificate in hand.

The following table (Table 5) displays Luz's teaching experiences. In order to provide reference points for the rest of her narrative, it states the schools where she taught, the grade levels she taught, as well as which years she spent at each school.

School	Years	Grade Levels
Green Valley	1978-1983	2nd
Martinez	1983-1996	K, 1st, 2nd
Hill	1996-2002	1st
Pecan	2002-2006	1st
Palomares	2006-present	1st, K

Table 5. Luz's Schools, Years, and Grade Levels

[18] Norma Cantu, at a Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE) conference presentation, reported this information, 2007.

Sharing My Culture and Language

The early years of modern bilingual education saw the recruitment of the few Mexican American teachers with teaching degrees to bilingual education programs that were hastily planned and of short duration. Some teachers, even with limited Spanish proficiency, were recruited based solely on their ethnicity. During that time, many teachers were placed in bilingual education classrooms with the expectation that they would earn their bilingual certification at a later date. Ironically, Luz, with a bilingual education certificate and fluent proficiency in Spanish, was hired for her first job in the district *as a cafeteria monitor*. Then, the following year she was repositioned as a teacher, but in an all-English second grade classroom:

> That was in 1978. My first year of teaching was, "You're a Mexicana; we need a Mexicana." Even though I had bilingual certification, they didn't care. I was hired to fill the quota of having Mexicanos at this school. The minute I got to this school, I realized I wasn't teaching bilingual education. There were no bilingual students at the school. My first year, I taught a second grade, all- English class. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Luz was hired for her first teaching position so reports could show that there was a Mexican American teacher at the school; the decision was neither based on Luz's credentials nor on her linguistic expertise. Although her professional career began in this inauspicious manner, she persevered at the school and recalls her five years there as having been critical in shaping her as a teacher. She did not allow the experience to be subtractive of her cultural resources or language. Instead, she expressed how important it was for her to share her language and culture with all of her students and with the school community. In spite of these interactions, she felt isolated.

> I was the only Mexicana, or I was 1 of 2. I was reflecting on those years and when I was looking back, I realized that most of the time I felt like I was the only one. There was another teacher there. Unfortunately, the sad thing is that she did not speak Spanish. She acted, I don't know, I want to say she acted like an Anglo. It was just that she did not (pause) . . . I just felt like I was the only Mexicana there because the other person did not really speak Spanish. It seemed like she didn't feel comfortable with her culture. It was real interesting because we really didn't get to know each other. And the reason that we didn't get to know each other is because she was really into, aaahh, and I guess I could have been that way because I think I would have gone that direction. I can see that if I hadn't become a bilingual teacher, maybe I would have been – I don't know, because I always look for more and how to share what I know of my culture. But, I don't know, I guess I look back and I think, "Would I have become like her?" (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Institutional and social discrimination also came into play, Luz remembers, during her first years.

> There were times in my first years when I felt like they're just doing that because I'm Mexicana. I can't tell you there were racial things said. But I remember thinking that some felt "she's not as capable as an Anglo teacher," and there were things like that, but the principal always stood up for me and she always backed me up. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Luz and her Anglo female principal started working at the school at the same time. Initially, her principal became a mentor, helping her through the difficult first years of teaching.

> I remember it being real rough the first year. But my first year of teaching was my principal's first year as a principal. So she took me under her wing. Everything I learned as a teacher, including lining up in two rows because that's how you can see them closer to you, sit them down on the rug because you want them to be close to you, everything that I learned that has really helped me in the public school – Montessori is something else – and I know that has helped me a lot. But the other things that helped me survive have been the things that she taught me. I learned a lot from her. Even simple things like, how do you grade this workbook so my back doesn't hurt. And I remember little things like that that seem minute, but they helped me a lot. She was like the best mentor I could have had. She would always say, "You are going to be the best teacher because I can tell you are doing this and you're doing that." She was the one that started sending me to

> TEA. Around the district, people knew of me because of her. She would send me to committees and she would send me to this and she would send me to that. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz experienced feeling isolated and faced discrimination in her first teaching position. However, she felt that everything she had gone through up to this point provided her with valuable experiences even though she was not teaching bilingual education. Nonetheless, she was teaching and she was learning. Then, she got her first bilingual student. Luz remembered when she got a Spanish-speaking student. She highlighted:

> Yes, the students were all Anglos. Then, Marisol Gonzalez came to my class. I remember this because she was the first Mexican child I had in my classroom. I remember that her parents had moved from Mexico and they moved into that area. She was real quiet. She didn't know English. Just like I remember myself. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Her identification with her first Spanish-speaking child is reflected in her statement about Marisol being "quiet" at school. Luz mentioned several times how she, too, was "quiet," always listening, never speaking, when she entered school.

Luz scrambled to meet the needs of this child. This was the situation for the teachers wanting to effectively teach ELLs. Hours were spent developing materials in Spanish in order for these students to be instructed in a language that they understood. It was difficult to acquire books in Spanish. Published materials were not easily available in Spanish and, of those that were, few were adopted by the state. Regardless, this time period planted the seeds for Luz's later practices, such as individualized instruction and second language acquisition. This student impacted her in such emotional ways that, to this day, she can still clearly see the student's face and recall the texture of her hair.

> I still remember her little hair, and I remember her perfectly.

> She was . . . you could tell that she came from an affluent, you know . . . I mean, it was a family that had the means. They had papers or something. Their little girl didn't know English. She only knew Spanish, and she was placed in my classroom. So she was the first experience I had with, "OK, here is one child I'm going to have to make arrangements so I can structure in her first language even though I'm doing the English curriculum to the rest of the class." So she kind of . . . and I think she kind of brought me back to my – because my first year was all English instruction to all my students. The second year when Marisol came to my classroom, I had to make exceptions. I had to translate for her. At that point we didn't have so many materials in math, in language arts that were translated for the children. So I know that I had to take the worksheets and I had to write over them, the English portions, what it meant in Spanish. So I had to do my own individualized instruction with her but in her first language. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Her experience with Marisol viscerally reminded Luz of her desire to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. It was in the last three years of the five years of teaching at Green Valley**,** Luz emphasized, that she truly began sharing her language and culture. She acknowledged that her reaction to having Marisol in her class influenced her in that direction.

> The one unit that I remember going out and really working on very hard was a unit on Mexico because in second grade we had to teach that. I was teaching second grade then. And so I remember going way out, you know, having a map and having everything so – what is it? – lots of wonderful things, visuals, lots of visuals so the children could understand, but also so Marisol could feel – I remember, that I do remember, that I wanted her to feel so much part of the group. I remember even having food tasting. This unit must have been like a two to three week unit. It was a big, elaborate unit that I had come up with, including teaching the kids La Raspa [a Mexican folkdance]. Then, because they enjoyed it so much, I remember thinking, hmmmmm, "Next year my class will dance." So then, the following year, which I think it was when we started bussing integration, I started taking classes – it was called "Dance for the Teachers" – so that we could go back in the classroom and teach the children the dances. And so, I would come back in the classroom and teach. I remember my class performing for Cinco de Mayo. So, even back then – and that's why I called it "Sharing my culture and language" because I remember starting [folkloric] dance with my classes. Then in the classroom, because I started taking courses at the University for my Master's program, then I started involving the children in teaching ESL [for the Spanish

> speakers] and SSL [for the English speakers] because when we started integration, we got children that I needed to teach in Spanish. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

Due to outside forces of integration, the population of Green Valley Elementary changed. And, as Luz conveyed, the district started bussing. In 1981, she remembers that the composition of her classroom was a third English language learners, a third African American, and a third Anglo. She took sharing her language and culture to another level. From 1981 to 1983, her final years at the school, she actually did become a bilingual education teacher.

> And I loved it.
>
> That's when I started reaching out to the parents and going to the principal and saying, "If I already have these children here and I'm already teaching the children over here ESL, can I . . . is it possible to teach these other children a second language?" And, see, back then, I always thought it was important . . . it would be good if I do that. But anyway what I think what was important and the reason I called this "sharing my culture and my language" is because we started integration, and when we started integration, the children being bussed in were English language learners and I needed to instruct them in Spanish at some point and then give them ESL. It is interesting to look back because I had eight children who were ELLs and then the rest of the class were English-speaking children. The interesting thing, though, is because of integration we got Black children also. (Interview, August 8, 2008)
>
> Black children and ELLs came from the neighborhoods that were being bussed in. So I had actually a real . . . I mean I had children in my classroom that were ELLs, mostly from Mexico. I remember that there were hardly any children from Latin America or anywhere else. So there were limited English speakers, Black children, and Anglo children. So I remember thinking, "Oh well, I mean if ELLs are learning English, why can't the African American and Anglo children learn Spanish?" (Interview, August 8, 2008)

The initial phase of Luz's career reflects the confusion and struggle in the early years of bilingual education implementation. Her district, at this time, appeared to have been more concerned with the letter of the law concerning integration, rather than the

spirit in which it had been decreed. However, this provided room for Luz to think about teaching and learning in two languages. According to Freire (2000), awareness of the historical moment and thinking dialogically are praxis–reflection and action to change the world. He highlighted that this kind of thinking "perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity – thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved" (p. 92). Luz recognizes that she was granted an opportunity for heuristically developing her pedagogy and practice in that era of ambiguity surrounding how to teach ELLs, which she would not have been in this contrasting current atmosphere of accountability, in which teaching to the test is the norm.

In the last two years of teaching at Green Valley, Luz found herself at a school in transition due to demographic changes, with increasing populations of students of color. This coincided with when Luz began a Master's program in Bilingual Education. Luz's decision to pursue an advanced degree in bilingual education placed her in a "counter-hegemonic" position due to the theoretical concepts and the latest research on bilingual education that she was learning. Her university courses emphasized additive bilingual education was effective for CLD students to succeed academically. Luz's new knowledge manifested in unique ways, such as her additive language approach of not only teaching English to her Spanish speakers, but also teaching Spanish to her English monolingual students, which helped her resist hegemonic forces in order to meet the needs of each of her students during the last years of teaching at Green Valley**.** She felt empowered by her advanced degree. At school, she started speaking up about issues that

pertained to the program for English language learners. Soon the mentoring relationship she had with the principal turned confrontational.

> I know I was giving her a hard time. I know we were on each other's nerves. It was OK at the beginning because they were all Anglos – right? – and we didn't have issues. When we started bussing and when bilingual kids came to our campus and when certain issues started coming up, then we were fighting constantly. Well, we started getting on each other's nerves. But then she . . . I remember, she was this good too. She did say, "OK, I'll get you to Martinez" because I had been telling her, "I want to transfer next year, and I want to be in the east part of the city." And finally she let me talk to the principal at Martinez. And she was very instrumental in getting me to the school. Very instrumental. And I know she must have had lots of good things to say about me. She groomed me. I know she also wanted to get rid of me. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

So, with the help of her principal, Luz was able to transfer to a school on the side of the city, which served predominately Latina/o students. Her move to Martinez began the next phase of her career trajectory.

Discovering Montessori

Besides desiring to teach in a primarily Latina/o community, Luz was also motivated to switch institutions so that she could belong to a school with a strong bilingual education program. Moreover, at Martinez, she unexpectedly discovered a way of teaching that diverged from the mainstream educational approaches of that time. The new environment provided her with a space for authoring her story in a different direction.

When she arrived at the campus, Luz was impressed with one of her colleague's classroom and began incorporating what she saw into her own early childhood classroom. She later found out that her colleague, Suzana, was adapting and practicing Montessori teaching methods. Luz was fascinated with the way Suzana ran her

classroom using differentiated, individualized instruction with hands-on materials. Bringing Montessori techniques into her classroom practice was possible because of the principal's trust and respect for his faculty. The principal's confidence encouraged her to embrace innovations and learn from key people. The possibility of an active environment that fostered students learning together without relying on competing attracted her.

> The principal allowed us flexibility. I had the opportunity to just play around with the program because he gave us lots of freedom. It was when I met Suzanna. . . and so I was meeting very key people in my life that helped me discover Montessori. It was very enlightening. I felt very empowered at the school. Plus, I think what happened with getting the Montessori, starting that, and feeling more empowered, I was really learning. My self-esteem was really good during that time. I felt empowered in my teaching and focusing on all my strengths and things I could do for children. I remember when I started teaching with centers, and I remember thinking when I learned about Montessori and how children had choices with shelf work that that made more sense to me than having them structured to where that at this time you do this center and then you're rotating from this center to this center — it didn't make any sense. I remember thinking, "Ahh, I don't need to be limiting this area to this child and making children feel bad that they didn't finish this area in 30 minutes," you know. (Interview, December 4, 2008)

This was a transformative phase in Luz's pedagogical practice. She had been searching for strategies that were a better fit for teaching ELLs in two languages. It was as if she were in an apprenticeship relationship with those who could guide her in Montessori methods and philosophy. Luz recounts, "I would go to Suzana's classroom and just sit there and look and watch and take notes and then go to my room and make changes. I learned really quickly from watching Suzana." Most importantly, Luz felt the pedagogy most closely matched her ideal approach to teaching and learning, both for herself and for her students. Above

all, she wanted to provide a caring, nurturing environment that was academically challenging for the CLD students she served.

Luz had previously committed to the concept of additive bilingual education, and the importance of maintaining Spanish, early in her professional career. Then, she encountered a pedagogy that she felt was more culturally appropriate for Mexican origin students. As Arce (2004) asserted, "A major challenge for bilingual educators is to critically reevaluate the limitations of maintaining traditional pedagogies that appear to benefit only some children" (p. 232). Luz wanted to be inclusive of the students' and her own cultural values and resources.

> I could not make children feel bad, no matter what kind of program they were telling me to do and use. I felt that there was something else I could do that would be more positive, that I could affect them in a different way, instead of making them feel bad. (Interview, November 25, 2004)

Luz could not find the kind of approach that she was seeking in the district's inservice offerings of a variety of strategies on classroom management and teaching methods. There was not a natural fit in what she was told to do and what she felt was best for her CLD students. In contrast to the methods that were provided by the district's teacher training, her *conocimiento con cariño* led her to embrace the Montessori method in order to include her ways of knowing with caring.

Luz's attraction to the Montessori method stemmed from her autobiographical remembering tied to critical reflection on her practices serving low-income, CLD students. Although Maria Montessori is not widely acknowledged for her theories, she developed pedagogical principles at the turn of the 19th century that are commonly used

in today's classrooms, such as child-sized furniture, hands-on materials, and individualized instruction. Her pedagogy was born and evolved at her school which served some of the poorest, learning-disabled children in Rome (Kramer, 1976; Lillard, 1972; Montessori, 1966). Montessori believed in the innate potential of the child; knowledge acquisition through the senses by activity in a prepared environment; stages in the development of the "whole child;" "sensitive periods" for learning; and individualized, child-centered instruction that promoted freedom (Montessori, 1967). For Luz, the philosophy and practices of this method made sense for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. She was drawn to the ideas of the prepared environment, student choice, and individualized instruction. And she wanted to meet each of her students' needs in every area of learning.

Besides discovering and beginning to implement Montessori methods, Luz was actively working toward transforming the school's bilingual education program into an enriched, additive one. Luz admits there were battles to fight even in a school with a reputedly good bilingual program. She was very disappointed to learn that the program exited the students at the second or third grade. Although this was the accepted practice for the time, Luz pushed for late exit, wherein students would learn English and continue in Spanish through the remainder of the elementary years.

> But they were exiting children early, and so when we brought it up these people were upset that we were coming in and saying, "Wait a minute, this is not what should be done. You don't take someone's culture and language and just say, 'Forget it after third grade.'" And so we were looking at maintaining their language and their culture. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

Her struggles to provide educational equity for ELLs continued, but it was a time of sharing ideas, speaking up, and action for her.

> One of the other things is that I really felt empowered at Martinez, and I think that was the most important. And I was really learning. And my self- esteem was really good. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

During her 13-year span at this school, from 1983 to 1996, her circle of action moved from inside the four walls of her classroom to her school community, to the district, to the state, and, ultimately, to the nation: She sat on a state textbook committee and attended workshops about Montessori-based practices and additive bilingual education throughout Texas.

She credits the principal, as well as a group of teachers at the school and several Montessori teachers outside of the school for inspiring her empowerment and providing the continuous learning experiences which enriched her practice. Her network during this time was comprised of groups of activists whose spheres of influence were in the community, in Montessori, and in the district. The actions of this network brought Luz to the next phase of her professional trajectory.

My Quest to Develop Dual Language in the District

The group of people with whom Luz was involved was determined to bring a Montessori-based dual language program to Central Independent School District (CISD). To that end, the group submitted two Title VII grants within a five-year period. Both grants were funded. The first grant awarded involved Martinez and Garza Elementary Schools, in the mid-1990s; the second grant, awarded in 1998, involved Hill Elementary.

> OK, at Martinez and Garza and then Hill, all those years, was my quest to help develop a dual language program in the district. I didn't do this alone obviously, but especially with help of the different people that wanted to do it.
>
> Unfortunately, the administrators were not where they needed to be. But looking back, I had a wonderful experience working with teachers. The best thing for me now reflecting on those years is that, again, it was like plant[ing] another seed in the district. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

Concurrent with the second grant, Luz took an Association Montessori International (AMI) training course and received her certification in 2000. AMI is a prestigious, internationally recognized teacher training organization started by Maria Montessori. She took the training to serve two purposes: 1. She would have more expertise in the Montessori method; and, 2. She would have credibility in order to assist other teachers with implementation. Throughout the grant period with Martinez and Garza, Luz first served as a classroom teacher and then as a resource teacher. As a resource teacher, she was not in the classroom, but rather she was responsible for working with classroom teachers to develop and implement dual language and Montessori practices. She was also responsible for parent education.

> I liked my role then. I loved ordering materials for the teachers, helping them set up the classroom, and then promoting dual language in the community; I loved my role. I did feel like I was doing more of what I wanted to do, as far as being in a role where I was mentoring and helping teachers at a different level. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

These were the early years of implementing dual language in Texas. Those involved in the implementation faced many challenges, such as the hegemony of English and educators' assumptions and beliefs about Spanish. This particular dual language program at Martinez and Garza faded away as the grant period came to an end; both schools

returned to early exit programs. Luz was saddened by the lack of will and commitment to continue the enriched, additive program. Looking back, she remembered:

> I was hoping it [dual language] would work because the parents really wanted the children to learn the two languages over there at Martinez and Garza. I guess where we failed is where the teachers were not buying in. There was more buy-in from the parents than from teachers. (Interview, November 8, 2004)

She realized that a major issue in implementing this type of program was attaining a collective consensus, not only among parents, but also among the teachers and principal. With this in mind, she transferred to Hill, where her friend and Montessori mentor, Suzana, was the principal and several of her like-minded colleagues taught.

> There was an opportunity for me to develop a dual language program there because there were several of us, including the principal, who were familiar with the program. The Montessori and the dual language program really started from these people getting . . . actually, what we were doing more than anything over there is reading. We were reading more than anything. So, that was good, and when the dual language program came on board, I guess some of us were ready to do it. (Interview, November 8, 2004)

The group at Hill had learned from the Martinez/Garza experience. Its faculty members took the time to study and plan in order to lay the foundation for understanding the essence of dual language even before the Title VII grant was awarded. Those involved in the Hill dual language program implementation addressed the issues that had arisen from the Martinez/Garza program and worked toward principal, teacher, and community buy-in. Unexpectedly, central administration became a critical concern to those at Hill who thought they had covered all the bases but did not factor in a major stumbling block: the district staff provided neither encouragement nor support for the Montessori-based dual language project.

> We didn't have the support. People were not there to see how we were training. They didn't get to see everything. They did have something to do as far as seeing it and looking at it and approving it, but the support from the very beginning was not there. The connection between the administration at Central with our group, as far as the way it's done everywhere else when you have a dual (a special federal program), that was not done. That lack of support from the director of bilingual education . . . that was what really doomed us. That's the worst thing that could've happened. You'd think they would really embrace this program. It just seems that way. (Interview, November 8, 2004)

Three years into the grant period, central administration decreed that Hill must initiate an extremely prescriptive program and that any teachers not willing to implement it should leave. This was basically a reconstituting of the school, a drastic measure. Overtly, the issue that motivated the change was about scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test. Underlying the district's move were racial tensions between African Americans and Mexican Americans. A small contingent of African Americans was concerned that the dual language program was not meeting its needs, based on TAKS scores. Whether Latina/o or African American, most of the parents were upset about the abruptly announced changes to their school. Although devastated by the news, Luz was energized by the parents' reaction; they organized a walkout in the spring of 2001 and testified before the school board.

> It was exciting because of the parents involved in the whole situation. I remember getting a rush because the parents were pulling their children out, and I thought because of the history of the "Chicano" Movement and all of that, I saw it as a real plus on their part to be able to speak up for their children. The fact that they were outside the school passing out flyers saying, "We're going to take our children if you don't listen to us." The parents were pretty upset. They did not want the program to be done away with, and they showed their concern. I remember feeling real excited that the parents were speaking up for their children for something that they believed was good for children because we had educated our parents. They knew what we were doing because we had had meetings with them. They knew what was going on, so I think that helped us, but not enough

> because obviously that's not who was making the decision. I really felt very responsible for the group as the person that had been training them and promoting this dual language program. I really felt responsible. (Interview, November 23, 2004)

Noblit (1993) wrote about the teacher as a "powerful woman" who had a moral responsibility to the collectivity as well as the moral authority to keep the collectivity together. Luz fits the description of the powerful woman that Noblit encountered when researching a teacher in her classroom. As Noblit noted, someone like Luz does not "assume or usurp power" (p. 37). Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, (1986) espoused the notion that, for women, power was socially constructed. Power and authority went hand-in-hand because of the manner in which this power was socially legitimized. Noblit (1993) openly stated, "Educational thought is not quite ready for powerful women" (p. 25).

In Luz's case, Noblit's statement seemed to hold true. The group of powerful women that attempted to keep the dual language program at Hill going actively resisted the proposed restrictive initiative and, consequently, placed under the gaze of the central office staff. This surveillance was focused on the parents and the teachers.

> It was awful at the end of the year because there was no principal and there were people in the hallways watching us. Yes. The minute the walkout was conducted, that afternoon, we had the area superintendent, we had people in the hallways watching what we were doing and who we were talking to. They didn't want us communicating with the parents because they thought we were giving them too much information. (Interview, November 23, 2004)

The following events highlight Luz's and a group of Hill teachers' ill-received efforts to negotiate with the district's administration staff.

> I was the one that the teachers came to and said, "Luz, we need to get together. We need to decide – because there were 14 of us that wanted to stay at that campus if they were going to continue the dual language project. But we also knew that we could not . . . that we wanted to negotiate with the group (the administration) coming in. If they did not want us to do dual language the way we had been doing it, we really didn't want to be part of it. So, I remember calling a meeting, actually thinking we were going to meet with one gentleman (laughs) and it ended up being 10 or 15. (Interview, November 23, 2004)

The gentleman Luz called in order to set up a meeting was the central administrator, a step above the bilingual director.

> Well, I called him and said, "Can we talk to you, because we're concerned. We, as dual language teachers, want to be able to stay here, both because we know it's a federal grant, and you're going to be getting the federal money. We want to know what our roles will be if we stay here." I remember calling him, thinking that he was going to come by himself to talk to us because he was above bilingual education, the director. We were excited that someone was going to meet with us because we thought, "They're going to listen to our concerns and we're going to be able to continue what we're doing." Well, the 14 of us came to the meeting after school in my room, and we sat there. We waited. We waited. And they called us to tell us, "They're coming!" We thought, "Who's they?" They marched in one after another and sat in my room. (Interview, November 23, 2004)

That meeting included the bilingual director, bilingual coordinators, the new principal, and the aforementioned person above the bilingual director. The teachers proposed that the dual language program remain in the school, but in a more limited way. Instead of a whole school initiative, they wanted a strand of several dual language classrooms.

> And they told us what it was going to look like the following year, and we told them that we wanted to negotiate. We told them, "This is what we'd like to do," and they told us there were non-negotiables. It was real obvious to us that we weren't wanted. That was a real heartbreak for us because we had wanted to work with them; all 14 of us had wanted to stay there as a group, as a community within. So, they wouldn't even accept that. (Interview, November 23, 2004)

The schools involved in this district initiative were elementary, middle, and high schools; all of them were categorized as having the majority of students in a low socio-economic

group, as well as having student bodies that consisted of a high minority population. Central administration purported that the schools involved in this initiative were low performing. Thus, low scores on the state TAKS test were the stated rationale, which prompted the measures taken.

Later, the district admitted that in fact, Hill was not a low performing school at the time the decision was made. This particular district initiative that dismantled Hill's dual language program was abandoned after four years because the central administration staff realized the prescriptive program adopted for the so-called low performing schools was not raising scores. Sadly, the impulsive implementation of a restrictive curriculum ended the Montessori-based dual language program and the damage was done, despite protests from teachers, parents, and the community.

The teachers and principal at Hill were attempting to bring together their past, present, and possibilities for the future to develop an inclusive pedagogy based on cultural, personal, and practical knowledge and caring to create opportunities for students to become bilingual, biliterate, and academically successful. However, this was not enough to ensure continuation of the project. The last two months of the school year plus some of the summer revealed the complexities of the power and positioning issues in providing an innovative program to low socio-economic students of color. Ultimately, the students and their teachers were the most impacted.

> The last day of school was crying. The teachers, we were all crying. We had gotten close. We had gotten so close. We worked real well together. We knew the pain that we were all feeling, the anxiety of where to go. That's the other thing. They didn't tell us that we had to reapply. We were under the impression that our names were going to show up as people that are available somewhere for people

> to hire us. That was not the case. We didn't find that out until the middle of June, so some of us didn't get into campuses, and we weren't comfortable going where we were going because we just went just to get somewhere, just to get a place. So that was the end of the program. Another one bit the dust. Buried in the dust. This was sad. (Interview, November 23, 2004)

To this day, those who were involved with the Hill experience continue the conversation about what happened. They attempt to figure out why the project was cut short in spite of the fact that the three yearly program evaluations, conducted by third-party evaluators based in Colorado, were stellar.

Many challenges encompassing the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, class, and language confronted the faculty and administration of Hill**.** Some people reported that an influential group of African Americans in the school community, led by a strong church leader, felt that the African American children were not being served by the dual language program and pressured the superintendent to include Hill in the prescriptive program that they felt would benefit their children more than the Montessori-based dual language project. This sentiment was based on the fact that, as a subgroup, their TAKS scores were lower than those of the White and Mexican American children in that school. However, this pattern pervaded the district. Others say that those at Hill were implementing a type of program for low socio-economic children that was usually reserved for upper class students (Anyon, 1980). Some believe language was the issue since the district has continued pursuing programs that push ELLs into English and drop Spanish as the language of instruction and even school communication as quickly as possible. Then, there was the district's overarching concern with results from a single test, the TAKS. Together, these aspects created a "perfect storm" that even the activism

of the teachers and parents was not able to overcome. Luz then had to consider her next steps.

> I had an opportunity to leave right after Hill. I was offered a position at a Montessori school. Actually, I felt bad because I would've been working with John and learning from him, this wonderful person. Of course, I would've learned so much from him, and it was hard to decide not to go there. But I think what kept me from going is that – and it's not to say that I'm the only person that the children would get anything from – it's just that I've always believed in Montessori and innovative things should be for children who can't afford to go to private schools. I feel that I can offer them that. Plus, I've always believed that it should be in the public schools and that if I left, there would be no one carrying on that legacy in the public schools in the district. There are people all over the city that believe in Montessori, that believe in different types of approaches, in multi-age, that believe in all these new things. But we don't have that right now because of the high stakes testing. (Interview November 8, 2004)

During the summer of 2002, Luz scrambled to find a position in the district. She briefly considered teaching at a private Montessori school, and while that option appealed to her, she felt the *responsibilidad* to continue serving ELL students in the public schools.

Disillusioned Time

Luz ended up teaching first grade in the southeast part of the city at Pecan Elementary. She was disappointed by the school's level of bilingual education implementation and its teachers' knowledge of bilingual education. She also arrived there having already been labeled as a "troublemaker" because of her advocacy stance for the program at Hill, especially her activist work with the parents.

> The part at Pecan is what I call my disillusioned years. I was so disillusioned because of what happened at Hill. And because coming to a campus where bilingual education seemed to – finding a campus that was in the same district that felt like it was a total different district, where I found people saying, "How do you know that?" like I'm the only one that was looking for research and finding it. I mean, I was real disappointed to find teachers that were very naïve, very ignorant. I mean, I guess that's the same word, but, you know, I didn't know how to say

> that they were not informed, well informed, about the program. They kept using the excuse that they didn't know, that they DID NOT KNOW that certain materials needed to be used, that they didn't know why they didn't have the materials for reading, you know, so many excuses. I was very disheartened. And I guess because of all that happened, I was seen as the troublemaker because of the Hill experience. And, I mean, they didn't want me to get close to parents because I guess they thought I was going to, well, inform and educate the parents. My disillusioned years . . . but that's when I went through my National Board Certification because I felt it was a time to reflect. It was a time to get that self-esteem back again and feel empowered. I wanted to feel empowered. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

Luz turned to the long, difficult process of National Board Certification as a means to reflect on her teaching experiences and knowledge that were not affirmed by either the school or district. It did turn into a challenging task and she failed one part of the six-part written exam. However, she persevered, took the exam again, passed and received her certification.

The nonprofit National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was created in 1987. The organization developed standards "for what effective teachers should know and be able to do, along with a process to evaluate whether individual teachers meet these criteria" (National Academies, 2008). According to the certification organization, 25 certificates in different areas are available. Luz's certification was in English as a New Language for early and middle childhood. The requirements included four portfolio entries and a written examination, which covered six 30-minute exercises focused on the teacher's chosen certificate area. The portfolio entries consisted of student work examples and video recordings of class activities. This procedure was designed to

evaluate evidence of accomplished teaching.[19] Hakel, Koenig, and Elliot (2008) write in the Executive Summary to *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs:*

> The board set out to transform the teaching field, and it has been innovative in its approach. The standards captured a complex conception of advanced teaching and stimulated thinking about what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The portfolio-based assessment that it developed to measure teachers' practice according to these standards pushed the measurement field forward. (p. 12)

Luz's district encouraged teachers to go through the process by offering financial incentives. In 2008, the number of National Board Certified teachers (NBCT) in the district totaled 191; the total for the entire state numbered 299. Nevertheless, this was a double-edged sword for teachers who earned the difficult certification, especially for the 90 NBCTs at Title I schools. Luz relates:

> They [central office staff] think that what's good for children is doing a real systematic program which is not right because the national standards [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards] say it's not right. It's real ironic. It's almost like they [central office staff] love these National Board people and they want us to be going for certifications but they don't realize that we're doing the opposite especially in the low socioeconomic campuses with the Hispanic and African-American kids. (Interview, November 8, 2004)

Though Luz worked on her National Board Certification while at Pecan**,** it was nevertheless a lonely and disappointing time for her. She had struggled long and hard for an enriched, additive program for ELL students. In many ways, she felt she was back at the beginning of the struggle for bilingual education. She knew that Pecan teachers were pushing for students to enter all English classrooms in the first and second grade.

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[19] This information is posted on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website: www.nbpts.org.

> Teachers were getting parents to sign children to get exited, you know, just everything . . . early, as early as they could. So I was very disappointed. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

Much of the focus of the school administration was not on innovative programming, but rather on getting students to pass the TAKS and pass it in English only.

In Texas public schools, the focus is on the high-stakes TAKS test. Luz, as a bilingual teacher, has ongoing concerns not only about the test, but also regarding the language in which the students should take it. Her experiences at Pecan reinforced the educational realities of English hegemony as well as a culture of measurement.

> The administration is promoting English. They want them to take the test in English. I started asking, "How many children are you bringing before the LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee) to see where you test them?" It's not done here. It's supposed to be done in third, fourth, and fifth [grade] to see what children are going to be tested in what language. It should be brought before the LPAC. That's not done at this campus. You know, they think English, English, English. (Interview, October 9, 2004)

Luz attended a particularly disturbing LPAC meeting at which the administration was attempting to send a fourth grade girl who had just arrived in the US to a recently developed Newcomers' Program at another school. Luz felt the main goal of the school administration was to remove a child who, in the future, might have brought down the TAKS scores. Luz's concern was that this child was going to be placed in a situation about which the LPAC knew nothing, therefore rendering them unable to determine whether or not this move would be in the child's best interest.

> I was so disappointed that we are in a time when we have turned the clock back, and we went back 20 years. And the saddest thing for me is to sit there with bilingual teachers and to see that bilingual teachers are not speaking up for our children. (Interview, October 9, 2004)

Luz's reaction highlights the emotions involved in schools, often sites of stress for teachers, students, parents, and administrators. For teachers, part of this stems from the split between relying on analytic evidence versus engaging in emotional relationship (Luttrell, 2003; Padilla, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). The following excerpts from our interviews illustrate how Luz verbalizes this split:

> We did have meetings where we got out of there real stressed because of what they were telling us about where the children needed to be. And you can feel the energy. In the library where we were all meeting, where it's all real tense and nobody can relax because it's all test, test, test, test and look at the test and look at how hard it is and look at what our kids don't know. But I don't think we problem solve how to get them where they need to be. (Interview, November 25, 2004)

> The first year I came here, I asked, "Tell me how the LEPs [limited English proficient] fit into all the information you're giving us." It got real quiet. They had never had that question asked. I guess I was real naïve. (Interview, October 9, 2004)

Luz did not deny the value of assessing and evaluating students, but she did question the use of a single instrument to gauge educational progress. Her concern about a test that highlighted the "gap" in academic achievement of children of color led her to advocate for multiple assessments to gain a truer picture of minority students. Although Luz almost always taught the lower grades that do not get tested, she reported that the pressures and emotions of the world of high-stakes testing not only affected the upper grade level students and teachers, but that the culture of measurement was pushed all the way down through prekindergarten.

In addition to the testing issues for ELLs, there were numerous opportunities for Luz to continue her activism and advocacy at this school. She narrated one of those advocacy events:

> They have this book fair there. I have my kids and said, "No, we're going to boycott!" The only thing they have in Spanish is one small table of books, when we have three or four classes of bilingual students in every grade level! And so I tell my children, "We're going to boycott!" and we boycotted. The next year, the woman says, "Oh, no, but they are not available," so I say, "do you want to get the 800 number so you can call, or do you want me to call?" I suggested, "I can call them 'cause I have connections with Scholastics." She said, "Oh, no, no." She calls, and we DO get the books [in Spanish]. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

Ready for a move after five years at Pecan, Luz sought a transfer to a brand new school. She was intrigued by what she had heard about the principal, Dr. Toliver, assigned there. He had recently received a Ph.D. from an Ivy League university and had only been at the district for a few years. It seemed possible to make a fresh start at a new school with a new principal.

Setting New Goals for a New Dual Language Program

At this point in her career trajectory, Luz had been teaching for 28 years. For many, the next phase would have been the waning years of their profession. According to Huberman (1995), this stage in the professional life cycle of teachers is marked by distancing and detaching. This was not the case with Luz because engagement continues unabated.

> I put here "Setting New Goals for a New Dual Language Program" because, actually, that was my intent: to come to a place where I felt empowered, where I could do my projects, maybe, you know, get someone's ear. I remember talking to him [Dr. Toliver] about it. I liked the way he . . . he just . . . he was very impressed by me. He was very impressed by my resumé, and he was excited that I was working on my National Board, and that I had been NABE Teacher of the

> Year, and that I had all these credentials. I wanted to go back to those years of empowerment and feeling like I was appreciated. That is what I said to Dr. T when he interviewed me. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

At this newly constructed Palomares Elementary, Luz continued to develop her Montessori-based dual language classroom. The first year at the school, she taught first grade. The principal seemed to believe in the pedagogical strategies she was implementing. Dr. Toliver, the principal, stated in an interview:

> Well, subjectively I love the way she approaches her classroom. I love what she does and the respect she treats the children with, the respect she has for learning and for trying to build on learning and not just on test scores or the outcomes. I love it. But, objectively, a little more of what I see in her classroom is that she really tries to create a space that is student-friendly, not just in a superficial way, but in a deep way where she tries to create an atmosphere, an environment that will support children. So she uses her own furniture because it's the right size and the right kind of setting for children to work in, not in the more institutionalized desks, but tables and chairs that connect more with students. She has pets and animals in the classroom that the children are able to observe and care for. She structures the classroom in a way that allows for student independence so they have their assignments or projects or tasks that they know they have to compete for the week. And then they have time in which they accomplish these things, rather than everyone sitting in a row or sitting down in a group and working on the same thing at the same time. And then, she really values and honors parent involvement - really wants to make sure the parents are connected to what is happening in the classroom. So it's not unusual to see parents either visiting the classroom or her communicating with them - especially her first year as we were first getting to know our community. She was very much in the community making sure that she had met all the parents and been out there to see them. And so these are some of the elements of her practice. (Dr. Toliver, Interview, August 8, 2008)

That first year, Luz's class was comprised of Spanish and English speaking students, including the principal's son, a monolingual English speaker. The second year, the campus was designated "academically unacceptable." This label meant that a segment of the student population had not passed a specific subject area. Luz recalls:

> This big bunch of fourth graders. When they got to fifth grade, they happened to be in this teacher's classroom. So this teacher was teaching everyone in English because she thought she was going to test them in English. Then, she left in the middle of the year and we needed to get another teacher for that group. That group ended up being tested in Spanish, but they had not had the preparation. They had been instructed in English all year. So those are the scores, the science scores that did not come out right. It was for that group. And it was only science. (Interview, October 4, 2007)

As a result of this designation, the district imposed a heightened level of surveillance of the school during the following year. This unwelcomed attention greatly impacted the students, teachers, and principal, decidedly for the worse. The stress and the anxiety over the course of that year took a toll on everyone. This was the year, 2007-2008, that I conducted my participant observations. Luz, now in her third year at the school, teaches kindergarten and hopes to loop[20] through first and second grade with the same group. The principal's daughter is currently in Luz's class.

> Last year was an awful year, but this year I feel that we are back on track. And he [Dr. Toliver] sat there in the conference with me and with his wife for his child's conference. And I know he probably thought, "OH, I'm so glad I have Nadia [his daughter] in this classroom." (Interview, November 4, 2008)

For Luz, it was a year, an awful year, filled with many challenges and opportunities for advocacy and activism for ELLs. Luz contended with the juxtaposition of her pedagogical philosophy with the district's oppressive restrictions and deficit perspective of the "at-risk" students, the teachers, and the administration at Palomares. It was her sense of *responsibilidad* for community uplift that kept her in the classroom.

[20] Looping is a process wherein a teacher moves from grade to grade with the same group of students, usually through three grade levels.

> But it's kind of sad because, you know, you hate to think, "Well, if I'm gone, it's not going to be done." If somebody doesn't continue to say something, they will continue to take advantage and think that we're . . . that we're closing our ears, that we are ignoring it, or that we don't know what's going on, or that we don't hear those words. That cannot happen! Somebody needs to speak up, and somebody needs to continue to say, "We are not going to accept that! We're not going to accept that!" (Interview, November 4, 2008)

Luz felt that it was important for her to speak up. She felt responsible for questioning the strictures imposed by the district.

The focus on the cultural means, historical conditions, and present context in which Luz is embedded brings attention to the concept of multiple selves constantly refiguring (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). This perspective considers that we do not just reproduce our selves and our culture. Rather, we appropriate, produce, and improvise, allowing for the chance to transform. The possibility of change through "self-in-practice," however constrained by history and powerful discourse, rings hopeful.

Improvising a Professional Identity

Caminante, no hay camino,
Se hace camino al ander.

Traveller, there is no road,
You make your path as you walk.
Antonio Machado

Bilingual education could be viewed as a figured world in which Luz was positioned with certain cultural resources and through which she developed a Chicana activist identity committed to effective education for ELLs. Her identity making reflected shifts over time, with her activism revealed in the daily interactions with her students, parents, school staff and faculty, and community members. Urrieta (2009)

stated, “Activism needs to be rethought by viewing daily ‘moments’ of agency in practice as activism. Agency and activism, through this perspective, are tools embedded in the mundane of daily interactions” (p. 19). He added that Chicana/o activist identities incorporate the idea of giving back to their community. Luz’s story made it apparent that this *responsibilidad* was particularly crucial in order for her, in her professional trajectory as an educator of culturally and linguistically diverse students, to develop an inclusive pedagogy based on ethics, caring, and principles (González, 2001; Hornberger, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999; Zentella, 1997). In order to maintain the connection of Luz’s daily-lived experiences as she made her way within figured worlds, the following timeline is useful (Table 6) to view Luz’s personal and professional milestones, as well as the larger social and historical events that occurred simultaneously.

Macro Events	**Date(s)**	**Micro Luz’s Milestones**
Crystal City Walkouts Bilingual Education Act	1968	
	1973	High School Graduation
Lau v. Nichols Reauthorization of the Bilingual Education Act	1974	
	1977	College Graduation
	Spring 1978	Hired by district as Cafeteria Monitor
	Fall 1978	First year of teaching
District begins bussing	1980	Assigned as Bilingual Education teacher
US v. Texas decision	1981	Begins Masters program in Bilingual Education
	1982	Receives Masters in Bilingual Education
	1983	Transfers to an ELL majority school
	1991	Title VII grant for Martinez and Garcia Elementary

	1996	Transfers to Hill
	1999	Title VII grant for Hill
No Child Left Behind	2000	Receives AMI certificate
	Spring 2002	Hill's dual language program disbanded
	Fall 2002	Transfers to Pecan
	2005	Begins National Board Certification
	Fall 2006	Transfers to Palomares
	2007	Receives National Board Certification

Table 6. Timeline

For Luz, the road had to be created as she walked it. She did bring a certain cultural knowledge to her experiences as a bilingual educator. The interplay of the personal, the historical, and the social provided situations for which there was no set response. These occasions led to the possibility of improvisational agency. According to Holland et al., (1998), improvisational agency could be viewed as "the sediment from past experiences upon which one improvises, using the cultural resources available, in response to the subject positions afforded one in the present" (p.18).

Essential to the examination of Luz's identity and agency in the construct of figured worlds is the "development of identities and agency specific to practices and activities situated in historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed worlds" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 7). These notions highlight how Luz made her way as she moved about in "a landscape of objectified (materially and perceptibly expressed) meaning, joint activities, and structures of privilege and influence - all partly contingent upon and partly independent of other figured worlds, the interconnections among figured worlds, and larger societal and trans-societal forces" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 60). In the

final two chapters, I developed how these ideas of Luz's identity making influenced her pedagogy and practice in order to serve CLD students. Luz's trajectory exemplified how through the years as a part of the first wave of bilingual education teachers, she has experienced the multiple iterations of bilingual education and manifested her agency.

CHAPTER FIVE

LA EDUCADORA[21]

In the first weeks of the 2007-2008 school year, I began my participant observation at Palomares Elementary School. I recorded the following field note during my first full day at Luz's school:

> A mother says to her son as she leaves him at the door, *"Adios mi amor; portate bien."* ("Good-bye my love; be well behaved.") She gives him a kiss and walks away. The child hesitates for a moment, watching his mother leave. Then, he turns and enters his classroom. This loving farewell message from a mother to her son raises questions for me. What does it mean to "be well behaved" in the context of the public school environment regardless of the explicit rules that are ubiquitously posted in every classroom? What does it mean to the institution, and what does it mean to the family? Does it mean that you compete to be the best in the class? Does it mean you help fellow students with their work? I think about the funds of knowledge or cultural resources that the child brings with him to school. I also, perhaps more importantly, wonder about how those resources influence or don't influence what a Latina teacher brings to the practice of bilingual education. (Field Notes, September 17, 2007)

I spent a full academic year at Luz's school seeking information about her cultural resources, pedagogical philosophy, and practice, as well as the influence of these three elements on the ease or difficulty with which she navigated various school and district settings. In order to capture a range of activities, the fieldwork conducted in this study encompassed the school year. This was a natural way to experience a complete cycle for Luz and her students from the beginning of school to parting for the summer. It also provided a way to present the shape of Luz's year with her students in its entirety from how it began to how the year came to an end. After four years of interviews with Luz, in

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[21] I use the term to mean a Latina/o teacher with awareness that pedagogy is influenced by cultural resources, power, and positioning.

which we covered many significant elements of and moments in her life history, the year of fieldwork during which I observed not only her practice in the classroom but also her actions outside of those four walls, brought together her words and actions.

It was crucial to acknowledge and understand the impact and significance of contexts of the school district and the specific school within which Luz and her classroom were situated to realize fully the purpose of this study, which is to examine the identity making of a Mexican American teacher in bilingual education and her navigation through the educational systems in which she is embedded. I utilized the notion of figured worlds provided by Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) as a frame within which to view Luz's construction of her professional identity through her interactions with such entities as the district, school, and classroom. Generally, a typical day consisted of her navigating through multiple figured worlds. Although each could be viewed as a separate figured world, I have illustrated the complicated connections between these figured worlds, which have influenced and impacted each other, as I have detailed the year I spent in Luz's classroom. While federal and state issues certainly affected the aforementioned figured worlds, I chose to discuss the district, school, and classroom as closely connected, contingent, and dependent.

The following sections discuss the construct of figured worlds, followed by details of the social, cultural, and historical features of the figured worlds of the district and school. Next, I examine the figured world of Luz's classroom in two different ways. One way looks at the ecology of the classroom through five dimensions (Eisner, 1992): aims and goals, structure of time and delivery of content, curriculum, pedagogical

practices, and assessment. Another way describes a day in Luz's life. Finally, I end with a discussion of Luz as *una educadora* (an educator) and what that means.

Figured Worlds

The physical characteristics and the demographics of the district and the school, although important, formed only an outer shell of the figured worlds examined in this study. Within the figured worlds of the district and the school were people who walked down the halls, taught in the classrooms, and worked in the offices, as well as the students, their families, and community members. Teachers, students, parents, administrators, and others were influenced by social activity and historical events; these impacted their figured worlds and shaped their views of themselves and others.

Holland et al. (1998) proposed the construct of figured worlds as spaces where identity is shaped dialectically and dialogically and where agency can happen. These communities are where human behavior happens through activities, discourses, performances, and artifacts. Therefore, figured worlds are co-produced, utilizing the element of imagination wherein artifacts are essential. Artifacts are the symbols and tools collectively and historically developed, but individually learned, which provide access to a figured world. Examples in the figured worlds of education include degrees, certifications, and textbooks. Just as a child has the ability to enter play worlds, so we enter imagined worlds that are formed and re-formed in our everyday experiences and practices. Holland et al. (1998) acknowledged the theoretical contributions of Vygotsky and Bakhtin to their notion of the "development of identities and agency specific to practices and activities situated in historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally

constructed worlds" (p. 7). According to Valencia (2000), this "past-present association" cannot be ignored in the education of students of color because "these contemporary inequalities are not vestiges of past discrimination. Rather, they are part of a historical pattern that is continually being reproduced" (p. 446). The CISD, Palomares Elementary, and Luz's classroom were figured worlds in which the past was very much in the present. These closely connected figured worlds were also a part of, and therefore had no choice but to deal with, federal laws and educational policies. Luz's classroom revealed the interstitial links between the micro of everyday life and the macro of laws and policies. Nevertheless, agency can and does happen within the parameters of culture and history, as well as laws and policies.

The Figured World of the District

CISD is a large urban district in Texas. Currently, it serves approximately 80,000 students. Of the student population, 58% are Latina/o, 26.4% White, 12.1% African American, 3.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and .2% Native American. Exactly half of the students are economically disadvantaged and 57% are considered at-risk. The ELL population stands at 23,000, or 28.3% (Texas Education Agency, 2008). The cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity is apparent, and CISD has been a district in transition due to a demographic shift from a majority white population to a growing population of students of color, which has resulted in nagging educational equity issues.

As Cuban (2008)[22] pointed out, CISD has had a legacy of segregation and unequal education that continued long past the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, the landmark Supreme Court decision that dismantled the legal basis for public school segregation. Historically, the three-part population of the city, made up of Anglos, Latinos, and African Americans, lived in separate neighborhoods. The students attended segregated schools within the school district. The schools that served Latina/o and African American students offered substantially fewer educational resources, poorly maintained structures, and unequal funding, when compared to those of their Anglo counterparts within the same district. Due to beliefs rooted in Jim Crow and a Southern mentality, the stark disparities between white schools and minority schools in the district continued unabated.

CISD resisted changes required by *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the Civil Rights Act (1964), and the Voting Rights Act (1965). Although the school board did approve measures that somewhat complied with the letter of the law, nowhere did those measures near its spirit. From 1954 to 1964, according to board-adopted "freedom of choice," students of color were allowed to transfer to white schools. Additionally, a policy that switched teachers of color to white high schools and white teachers to Black high schools was implemented from 1964 to 1968. These measures did little to change educational inequities for Latina/o and African American students.

[22] In order to maintain the anonymity of the district, I have not placed this citation in the references. The citation is available upon request.

In 1968, the Office of Civil Rights stepped in and found CISD out of compliance with the Civil Rights Act. After Department of Justice officials filed suit against CISD, the district was forced to develop a desegregation plan. Finally, in 1979, after years of legal battles, the district court approved CISD's desegregation plan. Unfortunately, even after decades of struggle by those concerned with social justice and the education of students of color, desegregation has continued to be an area of unfinished business, as have issues of educational equity (Valencia, 2000). However, more currently the concern has shifted from desegregation to accountability as a means to closing the academic gap between whites and students of color (Cuban, 2008).

House Bill (HB) 72, a major education reform bill in Texas, passed in 1984 and mandated state-level testing.[23] It is in this bill that the Texas Assessment System has its roots. Previously, no high stakes were attached to the first iterations of assessment, which included the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) in 1979 and the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS) in 1984. In 1990, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) replaced TEAMS. As Valencia and Villarreal (2005) explained, "The first wave of high-stakes testing in Texas, which began in 1993, was the use of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) exit-level test to award or deny the high school diploma" (p. 113). Additionally, schools and districts were rated based on the percentage of students passing the TAAS. In 1999, Senate Bill (SB) 4 added a mandate against social-promotion (Valencia & Villarreal, 2005; Valenzuela, 2005).

[23] This information can be accessed at a website I helped develop: http://texasassessment.edb.utexas.edu/TimelineTXAcc.pdf

The passage of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) reinforced the culture of accountability fostered by the Texas system of assessment. The schools and districts felt more pressure and concern related to meeting federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards. The unwelcome threat of individual school restructuring was an ever-present concern in the case of schools that did not meet the increasingly demanding standards. Then, in the year 2003, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) replaced the TAAS. Now, promotion from grades 3, 5, and 8, as well as graduation from high school were all tied to one test score. Schools and districts have continued to be rated based on the results of this high-stakes test.

CISD, like the vast majority of public school districts in the United States, has placed a great value on their state test scores and rankings. Unfortunately, this has occasionally translated into incidents of dishonesty, as revealed by charges that school personnel allegedly tampered with test scores followed by an indictment from the county for cheating in 1999 (Whitaker, 1999)[24]. Amrein and Berliner (2002) connected Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle to high-stakes testing:

> That principle is *The more important that any quantitative social indicator becomes in social decision-making, the more likely it will be to distort and corrupt the social process it is intended to monitor*. When applied to a high-stakes testing environment, this principle warns us that attaching serious personal and educational consequences to performance on tests for schools, administrators, teachers, and students may have distorting and corrupting effects. (Unpaged)

The focus on one state test, coupled with the district's history of segregation certainly impacted the administrators, faculty, students and parents in this figured world. Issues of

[24] In order to preserve the anonymity of the district, I will provide this reference upon request.

unequal access to and distribution of resources within the district, and the chronically uneven instructional quality provided to students of color also demanded some kind of district response. This relentless and narrowly focused system apparently proved too much for some district employees who were indicted for the previously mentioned test scores tampering in 1999 (Cuban, 2008). In spite of these challenges and setbacks, the district attempted to institute a variety of reforms over the decades. Some attempts, such as assigning African Americans and Latinos to white schools, seemed ill planned.

As narrated in her interviews, integration and educational equity issues in the district early in her career impacted Luz's teaching assignments and the demographic of students placed in her classroom. In the early 1970s, as a student teacher and observer, I was an eyewitness to the disparity in the educational quality the district provided students of color as compared to their white counterparts. Over 20 years later in the 1990s, Luz's dream of establishing a dual language program at Hill was undermined when the district supplanted the innovative project with a rigidly structured curriculum. Again, this reportedly came about due to the all-encompassing preoccupation with high-stakes test scores. Luz's story reflects the activism that she has always felt necessary given the incongruity in schooling evidenced by the actions and interactions within the figured worlds of the district, schools, and classrooms of which she has been a part. With this background, which establishes the social and historical context of the district, I describe the figured world of the newly built school where Luz currently teaches.

The Figured World of the School

When prompted for a description of the school in an interview, the principal of Palomares Elementary, Dr. Toliver, reported these details:

> The school is brand new. It opened in 2006. We just finished our second year as a school. It is located here in the southeast of the city. It serves the immediate neighborhood here. We only have one bus that comes and brings kids from apartments that are two miles away. So it really is a neighborhood school. And we have about 720 kids now. It grew from a projected 580 and has expanded since then. And so there has been some rapid growth as we get to know our kids. About 90% of our kids are on free and reduced lunch. About 84% are Latino students. And about 45% are limited English proficient students. And about 12% of our kids are African American. And a handful of white kids and one Asian kid. And that's it. The school is named after the first soldier killed in Iraq this time around. And so we try to honor the service that was given by this person, both as a child in Boy Scouts and other ways, and his parents being involved in PTA. It was a family that was devoted to service, and so that's the piece that we build on. (Interview, Dr. Toliver, August 8, 2008)

The principal's recollections of the demographic data of the school were quite accurate. The year this study was conducted, the prekindergarten to fifth grade enrollment was 743 students and 56 teachers, an increase of 95 students and 14 teachers from the previous year. Of the students, 665 (89.5%) were designated as economically disadvantaged. The Latina/o student population numbered 624 (84%). There were 340 (45.8%) students identified as ELLs. Out of the 56 teachers, 25 (52.3%) were Latina/o. This was more than double the percentage of Latina/o teachers for the state, which was 21.4%. That same year, the district employed 26% Latina/o teachers.

The school is a one-story building with a brick exterior and many windows. At the main entrance is a bike rack that is usually filled with children's bicycles. The front landscaping features large beds of native Texas plants, including Lantana, Sage, and

Salvia. The school office is accessible from the lobby. The office cluster consists of a reception area with several padded chairs and a counter, with two desks behind the counter for office assistants. There are also offices for the principal, vice-principal, and counselor, a conference room, and a faculty workroom/lounge. The faculty workroom/lounge usually has a pot of coffee warming. A soda machine glows on one side of the room. Although there are tables and plastic chairs for eating lunch, neither a sofa nor upholstered chairs can be found in this lounge. With faculty/staff mail cubbies, a copier, and a stand with large rolls of butcher paper, the room emphasizes its function as a workroom over a lounge.

Palomares Elementary sits on a slight rise of land. In front of the building, just past the parking lot, is the playground at the bottom of the rise. The main playground has a colorful playscape with several metal mesh, park-like benches around it. Past the playscape is a large open field surrounded by a gravel path. In the evening, community members use the path for their daily walks. A portion of the green spaces between the four wings of the classrooms, in the form of slightly raised beds enclosed by landscaping timbers, is specifically designed for student gardening. Although not all teachers have taken advantage of having a place for a class garden, Luz's class has claimed a space for growing vegetables, herbs, and flowers. A library, music room, art room, parent room, indoor gym, cafeteria with stage, outdoor covered play area, and outdoor courtyard round out the campus.

In the spring of the first year Palomares opened, the high stakes TAKS test was administered to students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades. The school's scores

resulted in an accountability rating of academically unacceptable for 2007-2008. This became an overriding concern for both the district and school. Luz recalls:

> Unacceptable, academically unacceptable because of our science scores last year. And the reason that happened was because we did have a group of children that came because we built the school. Those children had been exited because those teachers, I don't know, they feared that they were going somewhere else and they needed to just exit them**.** (Interview, October 4, 2007)

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the accountability system in place prescribed a one-size-fits-all proposition to evaluate all Texas students (McNeil, 2005; Valenzuela, 2005). No consideration was given to the fact that Palomares was in its first academic year in a new building or that the newly formed student body was made up of children from several different schools. Additionally, faculty and staff were just getting to know each other and learning to work together. Further, furniture and materials were continuously arriving throughout that first year. A colleague of Luz's talked about the unfairness of the situation and the faculty's low morale and distress in the aftermath of receiving an unacceptable rating:

> It was stressful, for one, because I had never been at a campus that was considered unacceptable before. So it was a new experience. And it was also frustrating 'cause it was our first year, and we were getting stuff throughout the year. We were so exhausted from unpacking stuff. Even though school started, we were still getting more supplies, having to unpack, stay late, get plans ready for the following day, get stuff ready for the following week. So it was really stressful, and it was just very frustrating that they would even rate us and make it so public. It was our first year, you know, to get organized and set up. They didn't even give us a year. It was like, OK, you are already counting it. So that was frustrating. Then, this past year it just in itself was frustrating because we constantly had people coming. You could feel the tension from the upper grade levels that they were in their classrooms all the time. They never had anything nice to say to them from what we are hearing. You could feel the stress and that it was always, "Well, you should have done this instead" or "you could have done it better," instead of "that was a good job." You know, you might think about just

> the way they say stuff to them. They are kind of cold-hearted the way they would write up their report and constantly having meeting after meeting after meeting. (Interview, Ruth, July 15, 2008)

No matter the circumstances, Palomares was academically unacceptable according to the TAKS scores and the district's central administration staff. It was with this label that faculty and staff began the school year 2007-2008, the year of this study. Magnifying the situation was the large population of at-risk students. The district designates students as at-risk if they fall into various criteria, for example, if their family is in a low socio-economic bracket, they are classified as ELL, or both.[25]

The construction of identities within a figured world is, in large part, about being addressed and having to answer (Holland et al., 1998). In this figured world, the school was addressed and treated in a way that was colored by the district's categorization, and the school had to answer to that. The faculty and staff at Palomares knew the district viewed the whole school community as inadequate. The unacceptable school with its at-risk students struggled against the deficit view of the district. The district's monitoring and frequent meetings were constant reminders to faculty and campus administrators of their failure to meet the standards. Consequently, this impacted the collective identity of faculty and staff, as well as teachers' individual identities and view of their students. Although they knew better, teachers voiced how unsuccessful they felt, and Luz frequently felt compelled to justify how she ran her classroom. The figured worlds of the district and the school highlighted how the complex interactions of individuals involved in power and positioning influenced the participants of these figured worlds (Holland et

[25] TEA website

al., 1998). The central office imposed instructional mandates on the school that the principal felt forced to carry out.

The mission statement of the school is as follows: "Palomares Elementary exists to teach all students to value effort, achievement, community, and service." A major initiative of the school is listed on its website:

> In honor of Corporal Daniel C. Palomares, who gave his life in service to his country, Palomares Elementary School will be a supportive learning community with a focus on service. Students will have numerous opportunities to serve their school, community, and environment while receiving powerful instruction in the core curriculum areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, technology, art, music, physical education, and health. (School Website, accessed on July 10, 2008)

However, once the school was labeled academically unacceptable as a result of the Spring 2007 testing, this very initiative seemed to be put aside in a single minded effort to concentrate on the TAKS tested subjects of math, language arts, and science. In an interview at the end of the 2007-2008 school year, Dr. Toliver related, "Yeah, academically unacceptable. It added some additional pressures and external influences." He seemed very relieved that the results of the Spring 2008 TAKS testing allowed the school to receive an acceptable status. At the end of the year, he acknowledged that the unacceptable status created a sense of urgency and intensity, which resulted in tensions amongst the faculty.

The pressure was evident when Luz talked about a visit from district staff to the school, prompted by its academically unacceptable status:

> We had been told that it's not going to be a "gotcha" visit. Like, "We see you doing this," and it wasn't going to be this "blame game." And it actually did turn out that way. I felt so . . . I felt a little bit invaded. (Interview, October 4, 2007)

Although the purpose of the visit was to see how the district central staff could help the teachers, there was an incident that led the teachers to feel otherwise. Luz reported:

> By 10:00 there was a rumor that some of the visitors had been in classrooms where they had been opening teachers' closets. It wasn't really a rumor once I had talked to the other teachers. This K teacher walked into her room, and she sees this person opening her cabinets. We didn't know that they were going to come and look through your stuff. These were people from the Central Office, like specialists, like bilingual coordinators, science coordinators, you know. There must have been about 25 of them. It seemed like a lot of people. (Interview, October 4, 2007)

At the meeting in which the district visitors and Palomares faculty gathered at the end of the day, Luz said she had to speak up about her feelings concerning how they were being positioned by the district.

> You know, I have to just say something. And I said, "The only reason that I want to say this is because we're wondering what's happening at the failing schools in high school." We're saying, "What are we doing at the elementary level?" And one of the things that I felt today was that you're not helping me want to stay at an unacceptable school and continue to work here. You are making us feel like there's something really wrong with us. (Interview, October 4, 2007)

Luz's feelings about the actions of the district brought to life Foucault's notion of institutions' drive to regulate through discipline and surveillance. Her lived experience concretized the abstract idea of controlling to achieve the objective of "normalized" behavior. Situated in such an accountability atmosphere, those designated as underperforming were monitored in pursuit of docile and productive bodies (Foucault, 1978). The district "inspectors" imposed a level of scrutiny aimed toward facilitating the management of the people involved to be more productive, efficient, and effective. Instead, Luz felt constrained and hampered in her quest to educate her students. The

district's organizational perspective appeared to institutionalize a business or "factory" model and involved "transmitting necessary information (efficiency) from curriculum guidelines (authority) via teachers to students, who become testable objects for school-by-school . . . comparison (end products)" (Boyles, 1998, p. 4).

She reported that teachers requested transfers to other schools or left the teaching profession entirely, not only because the school, and to some extent the teachers themselves, bore the stigma of being academically unacceptable, but also because of the effects of the actions of those exercising power, such as district monitors. Foucault stated, "People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do does" (Foucault, in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 251). Dr. Toliver felt that the school had veered off track during this time. In an interview, he contended:

> So we're going to maintain this year what we gained, but also try to reclaim some of what we lost in terms of professional practice and creating a school where people work hard and are passionate about what they're doing but not burnt out. (Interview, Dr. Toliver, August 8, 2008)

The district's deficit perspective fueled by Palomares' academically unacceptable status clearly impacted how the school, faculty, and staff viewed themselves. As Holland et al. (1998) pointed out, "Identity is a concept that figuratively combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations" (p. 5). They maintained that identities form and develop in social practice through participants' activities within figured worlds. However, they also declared, "Human agency may be frail, especially among those with little power, but it happens daily and mundanely, and

it deserves our attention" (p. 5). It was within the figured worlds of the district and the school that Luz exhibited her agency by implementing a Montessori dual language classroom, which allowed her to incorporate her cultural resources, as well as those of her students.

The Figured World of the Classroom

According to Holland et al. (1998), "Identities are a key means through which people care about and care for what is going on around them. They are important bases from which people create new activities, new worlds, and new ways of being" (p. 5). First and foremost, Luz identified as a Mexican American bilingual education teacher. Another of her identities was as a Montessori teacher in the public schools. Both identities figured prominently in her classroom practice and her activities outside of the classroom.

My participant-observation time with Luz was spent witnessing her navigate and negotiate the challenges of providing a culturally responsive and caring classroom serving ELLs. I viewed the year I spent with her, inside and outside of the classroom taking field notes, having conversations, and interviewing, "as a creative and contested *performative* space where personal histories, local contexts, and larger power relations marked by race, class, gender, language, and citizenship status came together" (Villenas, 2005, p. 73). I watched her performance of actions and telling as a co-performer, but her positioning and narrating spoke to an audience beyond me, and nowhere near us at the time. This audience included other teachers, the principal, the vice-principal, and school board members. As Madison (2007) explained, "Co-performative witnessing is

ultimately a political act, because it requires that we do what Others do *with* them inside the politics of their locations, the economies of their desires and their constraints, and, most importantly, inside the materiality of their struggles and the consequences" (p. 829). With this in mind, and in order to provide an in-depth examination of Luz as a teacher, I have provided two ways through which to look at her classroom: the ecology of her classroom and a composite day in her life.

Five Dimensions: The Ecology of Luz's Classroom

In order to uncover the functioning of schools as living systems, Eisner (1992) suggested examining the ecology of schools through a framework that consists of five dimensions. He used the term *ecology* to mean the interactions of one to another and in relation to one's surroundings. In my observations, I utilized Eisner's (1992) five dimensions, "the *intentional*, the *structural*, the *curricular*, the *pedagogical* and the *evaluative*" (p. 621), to capture a holistic picture of Luz's classroom. Eisner applied the dimensions as a framework for school reform, while I employed the dimensions to focus on an individual teacher and her daily-lived experiences in addition to gathering information on her interactions and relationships within different entities.

Although the Montessori pedagogy and methodology in Luz's practice transcended these dimensions, they are nonetheless perspectives that help lead to an understanding of the classroom. The intentional dimension refers to aims and goals. The structural dimension is the organizational aspect of subjects, time, and roles. The curricular dimension relates to content and activities taught. The pedagogical dimension pertains to teaching and learning practice. Lastly, the evaluative dimension highlights the

inclusion of assessment for student learning, the processes of teaching, and the quality of content. According to Eisner, "It is an approach that pays attention to the processes of schooling and to the context in which those processes occur" (p. 621). In order to capture the five dimensions primarily in Luz's voice, I followed Cozart's (1999) model used in her oral life history research with African American teachers. In order to keep the focus on the teachers' narratives, she did not interrupt the flow with her remarks. Similarly, I placed Luz's narratives between my own opening and closing comments for each dimension.

The Intentional

Luz's indices of success for the students in her classroom reflected her pedagogical philosophy and practice. Her intentions mirrored her aim to educate the CLD students in her classroom. These goals differed significantly from the outcomes of high-stakes test results stressed by the district. According to Eisner (1992), schools "operate on the assumption that the important outcomes of schooling, indeed the primary indices of education success, are high levels of academic achievement as measured by standardized achievement tests" (p. 621). Reconciling her goals for students with the intentions of the district and school has remained an ongoing dilemma that has confronted Luz on an almost daily basis.

> I measure the success of my children by how happy they are and how content they are and how they're learning because I think it's all of that. If they're happy, that means that I'm probably giving them what they need. I'm probably challenging them and giving them what they need academically. But also I guess if you're looking at the whole child, I am also providing an environment. And I think that's where my prepared environment comes in, is that the environment has to be something where the children feel comfortable, feel that they are able to take

chances. That they don't feel threatened by the environment or by me or by what I am asking them to do in any way, just as simple as following the rules, following the grace and courtesy, the lessons that we model for them, all of that, you know. So they all feel part of the environment. If that's all complete for them and if that's all appropriate for them, they're going to be happy. They're going to be content, and they're going to be learning. The bottom line is they're going to be learning just because of how everything works in the room and how everything is tied together academically and socially with all that a child needs. (Interview, June 13, 2008)

I guess meeting the needs of the whole child – that the child is emotionally stable, that the child is physically . . . that there are things in the room that are physically appropriate for the child – even in some cases it can even be the furniture . . . where the child has furniture that's appropriate for the child because it can be that it is too small or too large for the child, and that is not going to help the child learn because they're going to be uncomfortable. So they have to have furniture appropriate for them, bookshelves that are eye level, chalkboards and materials that are eye level, you know, all of that so that you meet all their needs. These are some examples of that. But also emotionally . . . emotionally I think that – having meetings for the group so that children get to know each other and so that the children understand each other. (Interview June 13, 2008)

I was telling them [the students] this: I wanted them to understand that I have certain beliefs, and one of the beliefs, one, something that I really do believe, honestly, is that every child is born with a brain that works (laughs), that every child learns. I was telling them that every child learns. That's why even though it seems sometimes that I was stricter or maybe even mean to them, I was just being more firm with them because I feel like I expect a lot from them. So I really do believe – you know how it sounds so corny when people say, "Oh, every child will learn" or "every child can learn"? I really, truly believe that every child is born with the capability, and that all goes back to my Montessori philosophy and the books I've read about Montessori and the child. I really, truly believe even a special ed child can advance from one point to another. I think it is just all of that; it's my philosophy, my beliefs about every child being able to be successful, and taking them from where they come into the classroom to when they leave. I think that's what bothers me about those teachers that go back to retention. How can children be retained if they are gaining? You can show me a child that gains nothing between the first day of school and the end of the school year. Then, I would say, "What are you doing? What are you doing as a teacher? Obviously something is very wrong with your instruction." I would never blame the child. You know what I mean? I would never blame the child. (Interview, June 8, 2008)

> So we just have to be there to support each other, and if you don't, then the environment and the culture in the classroom is not conducive and it's not the best thing for all children. So I think that those are the things that meet the needs of the whole child emotionally – meeting their needs emotionally, academically, and physically, you know, meeting the whole child, not just giving them and passing out worksheets and having them do the work. (Interview, June 13, 2008)
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> During the school year you can really work to build the culture for the children so they're very comfortable with each other and they help each other learn. So that's talking about the whole child, making sure that you consider everything because if the child is lacking in any area, emotionally, or even academically, the child might not feel comfortable and they might not feel successful and will not do as well. (Interview, June 13, 2008)
>
> I have very high expectations of children. That's one of the things that I've always had, and when I hear a teacher say, "Oh, that child can't" and "this child won't," it just bothers me. (Interview, June 13, 2008)

Luz's intentions were to create a community of learners that cared about each other. The education of the whole child was central to her plan. Her pedagogical aims necessitated a radical departure from teaching what was implicit in district expectations. Eisner (1992) stated, "Significantly new intentions are likely to require new ways of leading education lives" (p. 622). In teaching young CLD students, Luz's funds of knowledge combined with her training in the Montessori method moved her to develop and concentrate on goals that considerably split from mainstream public schooling. A significant difference was that she consciously aspired to provide an environment that met not only the academic, but also whatever emotional and physical needs accompanied her students as they came walking in the door of her classroom. Her intentions were to allow and encourage her students to embrace an idea and make new connections without the boundaries imposed by time limitations of assigned subjects.

The Structural

Structurally, schools traditionally maintain an emphasis on bounded and separate subjects (Eisner, 1992). The usual organization of the school day is by distinct times designated for each subject. Luz approached her instructional day somewhat differently. The structural aspects of her classroom emphasized the importance of the environment she carefully prepared and kept. The construct of the "prepared environment" significantly impacted how she organized instruction, as well as the roles of her students and herself. She viewed herself as a guide in her classroom, in which students were active participants in their own learning.

The morning consisted of a long work period, a large block of time during which the students chose their own work from different areas. It was also when Luz gave individual and small group lessons, which were usually focused on particular subject content. The afternoon offered the students a shorter work period because some afternoon time was devoted to special area classes that included music, art, PE, and library. Usually, the day contained one or two large group lessons that lasted no more than 20 minutes. An additional ingredient crucial to how Luz structured and organized her instruction was time for and treatment of first and second languages, which mainstream classroom teachers did not have to consider.

> I speak to many different things, but the main thing is the prepared environment where the child can make choices and have materials to use. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

> Montessori made a lot of sense. The materials are there and you just add the language. That's why I like my classroom; the materials are there and you just add the language. It's so easy to implement. Montessori materials don't have a

> label with it. You put a label to it, and you can use it in any bilingual classroom, English or Spanish, and with any child. It lends itself to the different variety of levels that you have, lower or higher. That's why I like it too. (Interview, November 8, 2004)
>
> We had English on Monday. I said, "Today is English day, so I will want to just hear English." I was telling them, "It's not that if I don't that I'm going to punish you." You know, I don't want them to feel bad, but that's when I want to be hearing English, and on Spanish day I want to be hearing Spanish. So they themselves say, "Today is Spanish day!" because somebody was saying something in English, and the day was Spanish. Everybody was reminding each other that it was Spanish. It was so neat. (Interview, March 19, 2008)
>
> On English day, all my Spanish-speaking children still get their reading instruction in Spanish, but English day means I'm doing the instruction in English, except for their reading activities and for Math, depending. It's like in Math, even my more limited children are doing everything in English, especially like in Math because it is more concrete. I'm doing everything in English, and if there is something that they don't understand, then I go back to Spanish. (Interview, November 4, 2008)
>
> I told the kids that were reading chapter books, "Go get a book from the shelf, from that place over there. Get a book, look through it, bring it, show it to me, and that's what you are going to read for tomorrow." It was amazing that they could select a book, very appropriate. I've always thought that that's so neat, to be able to select a book. I think because there is choice in the room and there's books everywhere, that after a while, they can tell. We talk a lot about it. I have said, "Not too easy, not too hard." They showed me the books. It was very appropriate for them. All of them! They were very distinct books, but very appropriate. (Interview, March 19, 2008)
>
> What has been stressful is staying on schedule, but that's not me. If I get off schedule, I get off schedule. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

She was required to designate certain times for language arts, math, science, and social studies; her schedule posted outside her door adhered to these mandates. Contrary to what was posted, Luz did not restrict her students to the scheduled subject area; they were allowed to choose their activities from any of the content areas. However, Luz conformed to the designated times when presenting her individual and small group

lessons. This exemplified Luz's ability to navigate the structure of the system in which she was embedded. She adapted external requirements to fit her pedagogical methodology and maintained the integrity of what she felt was essential in meeting the needs of the students in her classroom.

The Curricular

Important features of curriculum are content, activities designed to experience the content, and organization of curriculum (Eisner, 1992). Again, the concept of the prepared environment came into play in Luz's classroom. The hands-on materials placed on multiple shelves that lined the walls and sometimes divided the classroom space functioned like a three-dimensional teacher's guide. Luz organized the activities by areas: language arts in Spanish, language arts in English, math, science, social studies, art/expression, writing, computers, and practical life[26]. The hands-on materials were designed to cover concepts that Luz was teaching (e.g., magnetism, sorting objects by initial sound, place value, etc.). After she demonstrated the lesson, the student was able to work with the material as long as she or he wanted.

> I think that reading is the most important in first grade. If I teach them to read in first grade, they're not going to have problems with math, science and social studies. To me, that's the way to do it in the lower grades, the content area. Integrate it during story time and when you're reading a book and tie it to writing and tie it to math. Talk about your family and the community through a book that you read during story time. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

> It is knowing what to teach, like taking a unit, selecting the best things from the unit, and doing that. That's what I've been saying for the longest time. Why

[26] Practical Life is a Montessori area that includes everyday activities that the students can practice to enhance concentration and visual-motor coordination. Such activities include pouring liquids, washing a table, cleaning a tennis shoe, cleaning a mirror, and watering plants.

> waste all this time and energy and even all the stuff that people put out on the bulletin board . . . just for show. There are certain things I select from the units that we have to teach in first and second grade, and I love some of these areas. I like the metamorphosis part, all the life cycles and . . . all of that I love to teach because we have pets and these are very obvious and the children are very observant about their behaviors and they love to do that. So, I like to do . . . it has to be hands-on for them to remember what is non-living and living. For the liquids and solids, we just do which is solid and which is liquid. If you do vocabulary and do the differences in the different types of solids, different types of liquids, that's good, but not all the extra stuff. They're not going to remember that. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

> They need to have the experiences, not just throw words at them. I'm not saying don't give them rigor, but we need to know what that means, how we're doing in the classroom, when we're doing it. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

> I think that having meetings for the group so that children get to know each other and understand each other. . . . I think I provide a lot of that because we have children that have had certain situations happen to them before, in another classroom. For some reason people have labeled those children good, or bad, or active, or whatever, and unless you have meetings where the children talk about why this child is certain a way or why this child should be given more opportunities or why . . . we should be more forgiving or more accepting or more tolerant and maybe understand that children come from different backgrounds and children experience different things. (Interview, Jun 13, 2008)

> It's for us all to understand how we all have to be considerate and tolerant of each other, and how we experience the same things. Being sad, people experience that in many different ways. You know certain emotions are experienced and, because they're young unless you talk about it, they don't understand that they hurt each other's feeling with words. We have to work with those issues. (Interview, August 8, 2008)

The classroom environment is the site of a range of activities that reflect a scope and sequence in the major curricular areas. The materials were placed on the shelves according to difficulty, ranging from those needed for beginning to more advanced activities. Luz's shelf work reflected her awareness and understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), state standards for each subject area. She

offered opportunities for students to make decisions and, to some extent, define some of their own purposes in their own education. Large group lessons were mainly focused on curriculum content, but Luz also used large group time, which she called Circle Time**,** to deal with issues in and concerns of the classroom community.

The Pedagogical

Curriculum and pedagogy travel hand-in-hand. As Eisner stated, "No curriculum teaches itself and how it is mediated is crucial" (p. 624). In the process of delivering the curriculum, teaching practices were critical. For Luz, lesson demonstrations and shelf work were two major constructs in her pedagogy of delivering curriculum. Shelf work allowed the student to experience the concept as often as needed to master it. Furthermore, it was a vehicle wherein Luz could take a key concept from the TEKS standards that she was covering, turn it into a concrete, experiential activity, and place the materials required for the activity on a shelf.

The activity titled *Initial Sound Sort with Miniatures*, designed to teach and promote phonemic awareness, provides an example of the process. The materials are a basket, 12 miniature objects (each group of 4 starting with the same sound), 3 brass rings about 4 inches in diameter, and an underlayer (a felt rectangle about 8 x 11 inches). Luz presented the activity to one or several children in this manner:

1. She took the basket and the underlayer to a table.
2. She rolled out the underlayer and placed the brass rings on it.
3. She selected a miniature object from the basket and said its name with particular emphasis on the beginning sound. She placed it in one of the brass rings.

4. She picked out another object with a different sound, repeating the procedure and placing it in another ring.
5. She did this again with another object with a different sound, so that each ring now had one miniature.
6. Now, the sorting began. She repeated the procedure with each miniature at random and placed it in the correct ring.
7. She sorted all 12 miniatures by initial sound and ended up with 4 in each ring.
8. She returned all miniatures to the basket, added in the rings, folded the underlayer, and returned the activity to the shelf.
9. Then, she let one student or pair of students do the activity.

Her classroom practices involved the prepared environment, shelf work, and lesson demonstrations within the format of large and small group lessons, as well as individual lessons.

> Every child is born wanting to and eager to learn. But then you have to provide everything for that child to learn. So you do need to have the tools and skills to teach those children what it is they need to learn. (Interview, June 8, 2008)

> I mean, just going over how to do shelf work and just presenting to them all the little lessons, like tearing paper, matching cards, naming the fruits and vegetable, just little things that I did for the whole group. I've been giving them time to practice, and it's been so neat to observe and to see them work with and return the materials. The neatest thing is that when you have modeled the way you're supposed to . . . how you want them to return the materials and how you want them to work, and once you've presented the materials and then you've given them time to practice, you observe and it's amazing how the room is left at the end of the day. It's just really wonderful to see that they're able to put the materials back, to see that they know exactly what you've said. To get them used to your - my magic word, of course, is "escuchen" ("listen"), and all their little eyes look at me when I say "escuchen." (Interview, June 13, 2008)

> I do a lesson with the Geometric Solids (sphere, cube, rectangular prism, pyramid, ellipsoid, ovoid). I put them out on a rug. I name them and ask a student to bring something from the room that is that shape. It doesn't have to be that size, just that particular shape. Then, at the end, we have the shape from the basket paired with something from the room all lined up on the rug. Then, they can do that by themselves or with a partner when we have a work period. (Interview, January 14, 2008)

> We took the globe out and we compared what was land and water and then we brought the map to compare the globe and the map. (Interview, January 14, 2008)

> I think the philosophy that children could learn certain things at an earlier age attracted me to Montessori – the fact that they could work independently or without that competitiveness. One of the things that attracted me to Montessori, too, was the self-correcting stuff because then the child doesn't have to come to you and depend on the adult to see if it's correct or not. Definitely, the fact that you could just differentiate the curriculum, that also attracted me to Montessori. A child could be going on and on and on without waiting for a group of 15 other kids that are at a certain stage in whatever area. I think Montessori just has too many things that I was attracted to. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

> The thing that people don't understand is from concrete to abstract, really from concrete to abstract. When they [students] learn it in concrete ways, then they have no problem learning it abstractly. Just in writing in Montessori – this is what I loved – was that if you could write a story phonetically, you're ready to read and you're reading it as you're writing it. I never understood in public schools why we would be forcing them to read other people's work that had nothing to do with them. Why don't they understand that the child has to know and understand what the author is saying. The child needs to understand where that person is coming from. It's somebody else's writing; it's not your own writing. With your own writing, if you can write it, you're already reading. I think that, in language, that is amazing. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

Luz's pedagogy was rooted in her funds of knowledge and shaped by professional experience. First and foremost, she was concerned with the bilingual and biliterate development of her students. When she talked about writing before reading, she was describing a process she has used with her students. She realized that first graders sometimes had difficulty writing with a pencil. Therefore, she has several boxes with

compartments for each letter of the alphabet. The individual letters are made of plastic; vowels are red and consonants are blue. This is called the Moveable Alphabet, and there are several on the language arts shelf. The children use the Moveable Alphabet with miniatures or picture cards. Working on a rug or at a table, they spell the names of miniatures or pictures with the letters (e.g., mop, cat, rug, etc.). Some children expanded upon that, writing sentences that make stories. These literacy activities have highlighted Luz's efforts to offer concrete learning opportunities in a vein similar to what has been offered in other content areas.

Luz delivered her curriculum to her CLD students in a manner that built a community of independent and interdependent learners. Her self-contained classroom allowed her students the space to develop their first language and acquire a second language, in a natural and nurturing manner, without sacrificing conceptual development. It was an environment in which the teacher was not the only one teaching; the students helped each other to learn, cooperation was valued, and competitiveness was downplayed.

The Evaluative

High-stakes accountability based on the results of TAKS profoundly affected the education of CLD and low-income students (McNeil, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). It also created a "blame and shame" atmosphere for districts and campuses. Guzman and Mutchler (2007) stated:

> We assert that deficit thinking has now evolved to include additional parameters for assigning blame for continued gaps in academic performance between white, economically-advantaged students and other student groups. The deficit-based

> approach to educational policy action has expanded to include the child's family, home community, and, more recently, the entire local school community. Whole school communities—children, parents, teachers, and administrators—are now victims blamed for failure in an educational system that continues to fail *them*. (p. 2)

The year of this study was a difficult one for Luz because she had to answer to assessment requirements imposed by the school and district as a consequence of the low student scores, which led to the academically unacceptable label.

> This is the worst year I think I've had in a long time. You know, there are some years that I can look back and say, "Oh, that year was not good." But this year, I think, it was because we were unacceptable. Last year was a wonderful year. I was always very happy. I think when teachers are very happy, you can teach more, you don't worry about anything else that's from the outside. (Interview, June 8, 2008)

> The best part of this year was the second part when I realized that I did not have to do all these things. The first semester was the worst time, now that I look at it. The worst part of the year because of all the pressures and artificial things that we were told had to be in place - like the EEs [Essential Elements] posted, that was imposed on us – that the district imposed on us, and that TEA imposed on us, that the principal himself imposed on us. I realized, I don't have to be doing this. You know what I mean? I felt like I had wasted time because I hadn't done what I wanted. I think that is the bottom line. I wasted time because I had gotten away from watching the students and seeing what was needed. I was doing what was imposed, as opposed to what the group needed. You know what I mean? I felt pressure to do things that I would not normally worry about. You know what I mean? (Interview, June 8, 2008)

> What's been different this year is that we're doing the assessments every Friday so they are not authentic. (Interview January 14, 2008)

> They [her grade level] assess every Friday. I'm going to make sure I teach what they are assessing. I need to teach certain things because the assessments aren't really way off. I think they're okay. I guess what we're saying is, we need to look at what we're teaching, the units we're teaching, and be more selective. I think I've always done that better than they have, but only because I wanted to put in my own little other things that I'm adding. My environment takes a little more preparation. That's what's been upsetting me, all these other requirements when we're unacceptable. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

What we were looking at [during a grade level meeting] was what skills are we teaching and how are we assessing them. I do things differently, and I actually assess more informally, like everyday, on the hour or more because you need to be moving them, even in language. I guess that's why I feel a little bit off. Those tests seem so fake in a way, not as directly connected to my instruction. Because what's happened is we're looking, as a grade level . . . what are you teaching? And we're looking at a skill, and we're saying, "Okay, let's assess that skill at the end of this week." (Interview, January 14, 2008)

But in my room, that doesn't really work because I've had to "fit" my way of doing things into the test instead of using the assessments to guide my instruction. One thing we're doing is one skill we test one week. That's why I have a concern with those tests. We make them [the tests] up. Most of them we make up according to the IPGs [Instructional Planning Guides], according to the plan that, in first grade, we're supposed to be following. The skills that we're doing and we're assessing supposedly are on there . . . that we're supposed to teach. But they're not always developmentally appropriate. Some people [first grade teachers] have certain things that they teach at certain times. That's when they want to assess them. It's good for them, but it's not good for me. But I guess that's why this year I feel so off balance. (Interview, January 14, 2008)

The only thing that's thrown me off this year is that because of the way these assessments are being done, I'm just working around the assessments instead of working around what my children need, and that's where I'm having to go back and think, "No, I'm going to be doing a lot more individual instruction or small group instruction, and it's more to meet their needs." I still need to do it somewhat because everybody needs to do it, or else I'll be very different from everyone. So I will still comply with . . . I still need to meet the needs of those assessments every week. Everybody does it. The bad thing about that is you don't get them back. (Interview, January 14, 2008)

I'm trying to look at it positively. This last one on Friday was to be on graphing. Well, I hadn't taught graphs, but they had given us two graphs (like teaching to the test) because the girls [teachers], the ones coming up with the tests, wanted to make sure the children understood the format. What ended up happening is that they gave us two copies of two similar tests. One was, like, my lesson to start my graphs, but then I give the other test the next day. It was all in English. I just put the label underneath that was Spanish. (Interview, January 14, 2008)

So I thought, I'm not going to resist. I'm going to use it as to how it benefits my environment. I decided I'd do that, so that's what I did. So I can continue to do my other things. Today, I did give them some assignments to see if they remembered how to do a number line. That's the kind of assessments I like, very

> informal. So that's the kind of assessments I like to do, very informal and in every area, individually, not necessarily in groups. (Interview, January 14, 2008)
>
> I think it was March, I think, that was the best month of the whole year, but it is with this class in particular. It's because of this class – because so many things happen anyway. But I think seeing results at the end of each time I gave assessments, I think that was good throughout the year. Throughout the year there were moments when I thought, "Oh gosh, they're learning," you know? Even though they were assignments that I . . . sometimes I thought were not always appropriate, but it kept me a little on my toes. (Interview, June 8, 2008)
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> Dr. Toliver gave us this list. It shows how the children came in at the beginning of the year, all our class, what gains they make from the beginning to the middle of the year, and how many points you brought them up as a teacher. It showed which teacher was more successful in teaching reading. So it's very obvious, I'm the best reading teacher in first grade. (Interview, March 19, 2008)
>
> Success is not only just test-taking. It's the attitude, the good energy that they have or that they display in the room. That's success because the attitude that a child has and his self-esteem, more than anything, I think, if the child has a good self-esteem, that's success! So I think success for me is not only academic, but reaching the soul, the mind, just the whole little individual – that . . . that's success. (Interview, March 19, 2008)

Eisner (1992) argues that assessment can and should enhance the quality of instruction and learning. He elaborates:

> Evaluation is an aspect of professional educational practice that should be regarded as one of the major means through which educators can secure information they can use to enhance the quality of their work. Evaluation ought to be an ongoing part of the process of education, one that contributes to its enhancement, not simply a means for scoring students and teachers. (p. 625)

Luz would agree with Eisner's statements. For her, evaluation was not only about student outcomes that were tested and put away. She was not happy with the idea of weekly tests, but what most bothered her was that the assessments were not returned to the teachers for review or for informing instruction. Nevertheless, she felt it was necessary to comply with the recently imposed campus regulations. To some extent, she was able to

navigate between the manner of assessment and her instruction. She was conscious that the compromises she made in her practice allowed her to continue teaching in the public schools, albeit as someone who taught differently.

The interrelations and interactions of Luz with others in the context of the campus, as captured by the five dimensions, *intentional, structural, curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative*, illuminated the ecological nature of schools as a living system (Eisner, 1992). She navigated the educational system in which she was embedded through her cultural resources and acquired expertise. In order to reveal her navigations, it is necessary to look both inside and outside the four walls of Luz's classroom.

A Day in Luz's Life

The following is a composite of activities and interactions I observed throughout the year while shadowing Luz. I chose carefully to provide a representative amalgamation of what went on in her classroom. In this manner, I hope to convey in detail and descriptively the myriad of events that took place during the school day for Luz and her students.

7:30 am Luz and her first grade students began their day in the cafeteria with the rest of the school. The 17 children sat on the floor in their designated spot with Luz standing nearby. She was, as usual, dressed very comfortably. She had on an ankle-length skirt, a knit top with quarter-length sleeves, and low-heeled sandals. Her thick, straight, dark hair was chin length, and by the end of the day she usually had it pulled

loosely back into a ponytail. Other than a bit of lipstick, she wore no makeup on her smooth, olive skin.

On the stage, a group of students of different ages began reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in English and then in Spanish. All the students and teachers stood up and placed their right hands over their hearts as they faced the U.S. flag on the stage. Matthew, a monolingual African American boy in Luz's class, stood on the stage ready to say the Pledge in front of the entire school.

> I was so excited with Matthew this morning, up there saying the Pledge. You hear this tiny little voice. I could hear his voice real clear saying it all in Spanish. Once in a while they come around and ask, "Do you want to say the Pledge?" He must've volunteered. His mom said that he'd been telling her, "I'm gonna say the Pledge." So he memorized it really well. He knew it very well. All the kids thought it was really nice. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

Matthew had been placed in Luz's bilingual education classroom. His presence in Luz's class was not based primarily on the opportunity he would have to learn a second language, but rather on behavioral issues. This has happened fairly frequently because, as a veteran teacher, she has earned a reputation of being able to handle difficult children. She gladly accepted Matthew and was pleased that he increased the number of English speakers in her room.

After the Pledge, the vice principal and the counselor role-played how to act in the cafeteria during lunch. They sat at a table on the raised stage, acted like children, talked loudly, and threw trash on the floor. Then, the vice principal told the assembled children not to do what they just demonstrated. She then reviewed the rules of conduct in the cafeteria, which she calls the *café.* When the skit was over and announcements had

been made, the gathered students stood and left in their prescribed order. Luz and her children left when their turn came. The children walked in two rows behind Luz to their classroom. Her first principal introduced her to the class management technique of "*lining up in two rows because that's how you can see them closer to you."* The other classes walked down the halls in one straight line. There were other techniques that she rejected, such as the currently popular one of having children pretend they have a bubble in their mouths to keep them from talking while walking down the halls:

> You can't be doing that to children. You can't be saying, "Put a bubble in your mouth" to keep them quiet. I've tried it. Have you ever tried a bubble in your mouth? I don't think that they [parents] know that their children are having to take this little bubble all through the hallway. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

Luz felt this technique was disrespectful of the children because of the physical discomfort and the silencing. Avoiding management strategies she did not agree with, Luz employed a Montessori approach called *Grace and Courtesy,* which emphasized mindful actions through demonstration lessons. Grace stood for careful movement and courtesy for fostering care of the community. These lessons were an important part of the beginning of the year, in order for the students to understand how to move and respond to others in the classroom.

8:00 am The students entered their classroom, which was a large, open space with low shelves around the walls. The shelves held the didactic materials that addressed the content areas of math, art, science, language arts, and social studies. There was a computer corner with five computers. An easel stood near the art area. The tables and chairs were a variety of sizes so as to fit the children. The room was neat and orderly.

There were individual rugs rolled up in a stand for the students to use when they worked on the floor, if they so desired. There were two aquarium-type cages, one for a hamster and the other for a gerbil. Potted plants of various sizes were scattered about the room and added to the calm atmosphere. The windows, almost completely covering one wall, let in natural light. There was no teacher's desk in the room.

The day in the classroom started with Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) time. There were copious reading materials from which to choose during DEAR time. Luz had Spanish and English books all over the room: in bookracks, on the activity shelves, and in baskets on tables. The books ranged from fiction to nonfiction at all different levels of reading. There were science books in the science area, atlases in the social studies area, fiction books on a revolving wire rack, and more books in the language arts area. What was not available on the numerous shelves were textbooks (except the basal series), workbooks, or ditto sheets.

Each child selected a book and found a place in the classroom to settle in to read. Although it was Spanish day, the children were allowed free choice in picking a book either in Spanish or English. There were no assigned seats, and the students could decide where they cared to sit and read. Some read at the small wooden tables and chairs. Others rolled out the little rugs so they could lie on the floor. Several sat on colorful pillows around a wooden coffee table. After initially bustling around, the students were quiet and engaged in their books. Most have chosen a book in Spanish. A pair of students sitting next to each other had the same book, except one was the Spanish version and one was in

English. The English-speaking child softly read out loud in Spanish, then the bilingual student read the same sentence in English.

Because this was a Spanish day for Luz's class, there was a sign on a shelf that read, "*Hoy hablamos español."* ("Today we speak Spanish.") It was written in red. All text on the walls appeared both in Spanish and English; Spanish was color-coded red and English was in blue. Luz alternated Spanish and English days. However, her approach to both languages was to provide experiences that were natural and nurturing through hands-on materials and individual/small group lessons. At a parent conference, she explained how she initially planned to work with a child in Spanish and English instruction:

> So I explained to them how it was going to work. That one month I was going to do all Spanish, easing into English as a second language occasionally. I need to separate the languages. But I talk with the kids about how important it is to speak two languages. And we've talked a lot about that in the room. (Interview, October 9, 2004)

Luz's model for her dual language approach was very compatible with how she instructed. Besides her Spanish and English language arts materials that were kept separate and distinct, her learning activities on the shelves were generally non-language specific. Since she presented lessons to individual children or to small groups of three or four, she provided the appropriate language at the time of the lesson. Luz implemented a 50/50 model, wherein by the end of the year, her students will have received 50% of instruction in Spanish and 50% in English. In her model, literacy was always taught in the child's first language, and reading in one's native tongue landed a part in the child's daily routine, regardless of whether it was a Spanish or English day.

> All my Spanish-speaking children get their reading instruction in Spanish. I'm trying to work it in so that it is more natural. So it doesn't feel like I'm almost invading them with a second language when they're not ready for it. (Interview, November 4, 2008)

Luz's lived experiences led her to reject subtractive schooling very early in her career and instead embrace additive bilingual education. This type of bilingual education assumes many names, usually highlighting language, its salient feature: dual language, two- way, one-way, maintenance bilingual, developmental bilingual, and late-exit. Whatever the label, the goal is the same: an enriched education that enables the student to achieve academically in two languages. The vision is to value both languages in culturally respectful ways to foster academic excellence. There have been numerous studies on the effectiveness and benefits of this type of program (Thomas & Collier, 1997; Torres-Guzman, 2002).

8:15 am Luz said, "*Escuchen, guarden sus libros."* ("Listen, put your books away.") The students looked up from their reading at her. She announced that they would gather on the floor in the center of the room. When all were seated, she began a grace and courtesy lesson about walking in the room. The three-part lesson began with Luz saying, "*Voy a mostrar cómo caminar en la clase*." ("I'm going to show you how to walk in the room.") Then, without saying another word, she got up from her chair. Carefully and deliberately, she put her arms to her sides. She started to walk slowly, placing each foot cautiously on the floor. She walked around the room and around the rug in this manner. When she returned to her chair, she asked the students to show how to walk in the room: "*¿Quién puede mostrar cómo caminar en la clase?"* ("Who can

show how to walk in the room?") Several children raised their hands. She selected a child. The child held his arms tightly at his sides and walked slowly around the room. Then, he sat back down on the rug. Luz called on another student to demonstrate how to walk in the room. After walking around the room, this child sat back on the rug. Luz said, "*Ésta es la manera que caminamos en la clase."* ("This is the way that we walk in our classroom.") Then, she and the students discussed why walking in this manner was important in the room. After this, the class reviewed previously given grace and courtesy lessons on what to do when she says, "*Escuchen"* ("Listen") and what to do when a student wants to talk with her but she is busy with other students.

Luz closed this whole group time with making a list of actions that "help with harmony in the room." Much discussion and myriad *why* questions evolved as Luz drew suggestions from the children. On chart paper, she wrote the students' contributions and hung the list on the wall. The suggestions were recorded both in Spanish (in red) and English (in blue):

- *Caminar en el cuarto* (Walk in the room)
- *Caminar alrededor de las carpetas* (Walk around the rugs)
- *Que no gastan papel* (Do not waste paper)
- *Poner las cosas donde estaban* (Put things back where they were)
- *Toca suave a la maestra* ***y*** *espere hasta que la maestra hable contigo* (Softly tap the teacher and wait until the teacher can talk to you)
- *Vamos a escuchar bien* (We are going to listen well)
- *Dejar el baño limpio* (Leave the bathroom clean)
- *No doblen los libros; cuídenlos* (Do not bend the books; take care of them)
- *Dejen espacio a otros niños cuando se sienten* (Leave room for other students when you sit down)

Luz also noted the English, which was similar, but not the same.

- Respect other people's rugs
- Walk carefully around the room
- Put the materials back where you got them
- We have to "listen"
- Leave the bathroom clean
- Don't bend the books, take care of them
- Leave room for others on the rug

The whole group activities took no longer than 30 minutes. At the end, the group moved to another part of the room where everyone could see a dry erase board. This was the *menu board*, where Luz listed work that she wanted the students to do for the day. The board listed the following:

1. *Formas de metal*	1. Metal Insets
2. ILA[27] (*tarjetas de sonidos initiales*)	2. ILA (Initial Sound Cards)
3. *Escalón de cuentas*	3. Bead Stair
4. ILA (*objectos con sonidos*)	4. ILA (objects with Moveable Alphabet)
5. *Cajas de palitos*	5. Spindle Boxes
6. *Pares y nones*	6. Odd and Even
7. ILA (*dibujos con nombres*)	7. ILA (pictures with labels)
8. *Leer, leer, leer*	8. Read, read, read

(See Appendix H for photos of these materials)

[27] Individualized Language Activities (ILA) are parallel literacy materials in English and Spanish.

The rule was that students could work on menu items in any order they liked during the day, but they must have completed all of the activities by day's end.

8:45 am Before leaving the group, Luz asked each child what she or he would do afterward. Each answered with the activity they would commence. Each grabbed that work off the shelf and found somewhere to work. These are some examples of the children's choices: Initial Sound Sort, Watercolors, Cutting on the Lines, Clay, Coloring, Tweezing, and Bead Stair. Some of these activities were not on the menu, but the children knew that they could choose what they wanted as long as they completed the menu activities by the end of the day. Another important rule for free choice was that students could only pick activities that they had in a lesson. As the children finished their activities, they returned the materials to the shelf and picked out new work. Some of the children worked by themselves, and some of the children worked in pairs. During this work period, Luz called upon different children for individual lessons on a rug or at a table. She also instructed small groups of three to four children throughout the morning. Most of these lessons focused on literacy. She was barely noticeable in the classroom as she blended in with the students going about their activities. Some of the children conversed quietly. A boy and a girl spoke in Spanish at the easel, where the boy painted with the red and yellow colors that Luz placed there. They both looked where the yellow and red mixed together on the paper.

Girl: *"Amarillo y rojo hacen anaranjado."* ("Yellow and red make orange.")

Boy: "Right."

11:30 am Luz said, "*Escuchen*, *guarden su trabajo. Vayamos a la cafeteria para el almuerzo.*" ("Listen. Put your work away. It is time to go to the cafeteria for lunch.") Students scurried to put their work back on the shelves and sit on the floor to show they were ready for lunch. The class, again, walked in two lines down the hall to the cafeteria. According to the schedule, lunchtime was from 11:57 to 12:27. When they arrived at the cafeteria, it was noisy and somewhat chaotic. After they got their trays, Luz directed them to the tables in the nearby outdoor courtyard.

> Just taking them out in the sunlight, sitting there eating lunch makes a big difference. It calms them down. (Interview, January 14, 2008)

It was a beautiful day for eating outside. Although the students did eat in the cafeteria at times, Luz preferred that they either ate outside or carried their trays back to the classroom to eat.

Once out in the courtyard, the children scattered to different tables. Luz and I sat at a table to eat and talk. It was sunny and cool. Acknowledging that extrinsic rewards were not very Montessori, Luz sheepishly described rewards that she used, such as little prizes for attendance, for homework completed and turned in, and for reading a whole book. When she talked about rewarding the children for certain things, she seemed very conflicted.

> I know in Montessori implicit rewards are good and explicit rewards are bad. But since I started rewarding for attendance, I have had 100% for the last two weeks. (Interview, January 14, 2008)

As with all other classroom teachers, Luz's daily attendance was carefully scrutinized by the administration because the school's average daily attendance was one of the

indicators used for school ratings. Luz must make choices on a daily basis and act on those choices. Luz, as much as any teacher, wanted to achieve the results necessary for acceptance in the figured worlds in which she lived and worked. She was torn between her activism and what the administration and other teachers thought about her. This ambivalence and conflict reflected her ultimate reality: wanting to remain herself while simultaneously attempting to belong to the group with whom she worked.

After lunch, Luz and her students returned to the classroom. Posted on the door outside the classroom was the afternoon schedule:

11:57 – 12:27 *Almuerzo*
(Lunch)

12:27 – 12:37 *Descanso*
(Rest)

12:37 – 1:00 *Ciencia*
(Science)

1:00 – 1:45 *Áreas Especiales*
(Special Areas)

1:45 – 2:40 *Tiempo del cuento/Escritura Compartida/Redacción*
(Storytime/Shared Writing/Writing Workshop)

2:45 *Despedida*
(Dismissal)

12:30 pm Back in the classroom, the children sat on the floor in a circle. Rest time was a meditative moment in which the students relaxed with their eyes closed. Luz asked them to picture in their minds different scenes, such as a tree blowing in the wind, and a shower of sparkles falling on their heads. The children continued with eyes closed and sat quietly and silently for a few minutes more.

12:40 pm The students began the afternoon work period. While the other children undertook their chosen activities on a rug or at a table, Luz sat on the floor conducting a group lesson with seven children. Each child had an underlayer, a pencil, and a box of crayons. A basket of scissors occupied space on the floor in the middle of the group. The lesson centered on the parts of the flower. To summarize, these were the students' objectives: to fold an 8x11-inch paper several times, cut only certain lines, draw the different parts of a plant (flower, leaves, stem, and roots), and label the flaps. Luz's introductory lecture included very little demonstration. She began by folding her paper in half. She told the students to do the same and make the corners match. Then, she folded the page again and, finally, one more time in half. She then unfolded the paper and cut down some of the folds. The students tried to follow along by copying Luz's actions, but they encountered much confusion and raised many questions. Luz told several students, "*Hacen mal,"* ("You are doing it badly.") She told the students that they were doing it wrong. She intended for them to draw the plant parts on the uncut side of the paper and write the corresponding names of the parts on the cut side. She modeled very little and mostly verbalized the instructions. She never showed the students an end product so they would know where they were going with this lesson. She continued to tell the students they were doing badly. Finally, the children arrived at a product that approximated what Luz showed them. She repeated this lesson with another group. It proceeded about the same, not much better than the first one.

This lesson's presentation and consequent results were markedly different from other lessons that Luz had given. There had been so much disorientation that amounted

to a negative experience for several students. She verbally disciplined almost constantly during this lesson and doled out some very unfavorable feedback to several children. This observation was included to provide a full picture to show the difficult decisions that Luz had to make on a daily basis.

After school, she voluntarily explained that the parts-of-a-plant lesson was not of her choosing, but was decided on at a grade level meeting. The idea was to have the children's work displayed for the central office staff when they came for a monitoring visit. This surveillance impacted Luz in the classroom. She carried out this lesson, not because it was the right time for the students, or the right lesson for every student, or the way she would do the lesson, but because she knew she was being watched and judged. This was one of several situations Luz encountered throughout the year in which she did not agree with something, but did it anyway.

While the group flower lessons took place, the rest of the class worked individually until it was time for special areas: library, PE, or art.

1:00 pm Special areas time also served as Luz's planning time. After walking the children to art class, Luz returned to her classroom to organize the folklorico group costumes because her dance group was performing after school.

1:45 pm Back from art, Luz's students began another individual work period. At this point, most had finished everything on the menu list and advanced to art, practical life, science, or social studies activities. Soon the students in the folklorico group started arriving and began dressing for their performance. The folklorico group students spanned second to fifth grade. None of Luz's students belonged to it. It was a volunteer activity

with after school practice every Friday. Ever since her Mexican folk dancing experience with her students at her first school, Luz has spearheaded a student group devoted to folklorico dancing. She has continued with this labor of love over the years to pass on to the students a part of their heritage.

Even with all the chaos surrounding them as the 12 extra folklorico children in the room dressed in the restrooms, fixed their hair, and put on their shoes in preparation for the performance, Luz's students remained very calm and centered in their work. They looked around a bit, but mostly focused on their activities, as colorful costumes and skirts swirled around. Two students, though, seemed especially interested in the events. One asked, "*¿Puedo mirar a los niños?"* ("Can I watch the children?") Luz said, "*Siéntate en esta silla y puedes mirarlos. Puedes mirar los niños de folklórico."* ("Sit in this chair and you can observe and watch what is going on. You can watch the folklorico boys and girls.") And that was what the two students did. Besides those two, the others in class continued their studies.

2:45 pm The school day came to a close with the folklorico dancers whirling out of the classroom to the cafeteria with some mothers. Luz said, "*Escuchen"* ("Listen") one last time for the day. The children put away their work, sat on the floor in the center of the room, and waited for Luz to call their names so they could line up to go home. Luz's day continued after the dismissal of her students and the Folklorico group performance.

5:00 pm After school, Luz drove to Jalisco Restaurant for a Salsa Sisters meeting. This was a group that Luz started for bilingual education teachers in the district

so they had a chance to talk about instructional strategies and materials, and just keep connected. They had not met since May 2007. This would be their first meeting of the school year; they planned to meet once a month. Two women greeted her with hugs and exclamations in English and Spanish as she walked in the restaurant. Each time another member arrived, everyone repeated the same ritual of *abrazos* (hugs). In just a few moments, the group consisted of 11 women and one baby of around nine months. All were Latinas who taught the lower grades, prekindergarten to second grade, at different schools, but within the bilingual program of CISD.

One of the women became the main interest of the evening when she talked about how she was instructed by her principal to teach accelerated English in first grade. Therefore, she mostly conducted her classroom in English. She discussed how some research said that bilingual education was good and other research said that immersion in English worked better. The other teachers listened but told her that she needed to advocate for the students because she was the only one who would. She questioned the group: "So what's wrong with doing English? They have to learn it anyway." Several of the women made numerous points about how bad it was for students to begin early immersion in English.

The conversation focused on how most of them were not really allowed to educate bilingually. The principals were pushing English and transitioning the students early, even at first grade. The issues discussed that night echo the very issues that have been discussed by bilingual educators for the past 25 years. A shared concern seemed to figure as the central question of the evening: Was bilingual education effective for the

students? Everyone has eaten and the meeting has begun to adjourn. Luz's day ended around 8:00 pm with a round of *abrazos* as everyone left.

La Educadora: A Professional Identity in Motion

Contrary to popular folk wisdom, people are not born as teachers; rather, people are made into teachers. Luz's experiences have forged who she has become: *una educadora*. She is a "professional identity-in-motion" formed "in and through social practice, constructed and reconstructed over time and place" (Green & Reid, 2008, p. 20). Her identity making as a teacher has been understood through "the interplay between professional identity and social subjectivity" (p. 20). Framed in this way, a teacher's being, becoming, and belonging emphasize the disparate discourses in Luz's life and the possibility of agentic activity.

At this point in her professional trajectory, Luz has the confidence and credentials to implement a dual language Montessori classroom; that makes her somewhat of an outlier. In order to overcome isolation and marginalization arising from differences in practices and philosophies, Luz maintains connections with like-minded educators and seeks out others beyond her campus. Her network forms a "community in practice" that allows for participation, meaning making, and continued identity formation with others concerned about the education of CLD students (Wenger, 1998).

She continually strives to be and become the kind of teacher who can serve CLD students well. Her story revealed situations and interactions of conflict and struggle as she negotiated the challenges of educating CLD students in bilingual education within mainstream public schools. She disclosed what she drew from her funds of knowledge

and cultural resources. Primarily, she made known her self-authoring from improvisation and orchestration of the voices coming from the multiple discourses surrounding her, such as the district, school, community, in order to implement educational innovations. Moreover, she actively attempted to connect her students' schooling with their home/community experiences and their parents'/caretakers' lives.

La educadora is not only a teacher with a class full of children; she is a person with a certain type of morality that brims with a sense of responsibility for community uplift and the common good. Luz is concerned with nurturing students, parents, and colleagues across various intersecting communities. Her pedagogic agency extends far beyond the four walls of her classroom. To Luz, learning and teaching contemporaneously occur in the school, the community, the district, and the state. She concerns herself with policy, as well as curriculum. During the year of this study, she called district board members to voice various concerns, attended state board of education meetings, and participated in a team, which developed Spanish Language Arts standards for the Texas Education Agency. Instead of waning in the final years of her career, Luz broadened her involvement in bilingual education to a level designed to impact the education of all Latinas/os in Texas. Her position as *la educadora* was as an educator who effectively has taught in a public school bilingual classroom and simultaneously used her funds of knowledge to help her students become *bien educados.* The connection of the concept of *la educadora* with her cultural understandings showed the potential that a truly bilingual, bicultural person was able to bring to the classroom.

CHAPTER SIX

LEARNING AN ACTIVIST CHICANA *EDUCADORA* IDENTITY

Through (re)telling Luz's stories and closely observing her teaching, I have supplemented the scant narratives that are currently part of the body of academic research that has documented the pedagogical practices of a Latina bilingual education teacher. I analyzed Luz's life history and shadowed her for a school year to reveal her perceptions, feelings, and experiences, as well as to gain a clearer understanding of teacher identity and agency in the contested area of bilingual education. The data showed her wrestling with socially and historically constructed realities that included her experiences as a Mexican American growing up in south Texas and as a Spanish-speaking student in a monolingual English public school system. Her narratives reflected not only struggles within herself as an individual, but also between herself and her worlds.

Rather than focus on why minority students failed to achieve academic success, Luz strove to figure out how she could effectively work with her pupils. Within the discourse of how best to educate a culturally and linguistically diverse population, Luz dealt with multiple voices. A major revelation from my investigation was the articulation of her continual reflection and action. As González (2001) stated, "Schools must be sites for the interrogation of knowledge production and not merely sites for its reproduction. What does this mean for teachers in classrooms? It means that although we should continue to acknowledge the diversity of children's experiences, it is also important to

learn from these experiences" (p. 185). Luz's critical awareness of the importance of learning from and contributing to her students' experiences exhibited the usefulness of Freire's (2000) notion of praxis. He explained praxis as "human activity [that] consists of action and reflection; it is reflection and action" (p. 125).

A general finding of this study was that Luz, a Chicana activist *educadora*, displayed an advocacy that embodied praxis in that her reflections and actions served not only her own students, but CLD students in general. Crucial to her *educadora* praxis was what I have called autobiographical consciousness. I used this term to explain a teacher's evolving critical awareness of self and lived context, which has been woven into her pedagogical practice.

My study confirmed research which revealed that personal and professional identities were organically linked for minority group teachers (Allexsaht-Snider, 1996; Galindo and Olguín, 1996; Urrieta, 2009). Latinas/os' schooling and teaching experiences have influenced pedagogy because of the assimilation discourse that has been deeply embedded in the public education environment. Thus, teachers are agents helping to create and maintain an educational system, and navigating between the way they were raised and educated and what they now see as most beneficial for students. Contradicting Huberman's (1995) study of teachers' professional life spans wherein veteran teachers expressed a distancing and detachment from their work, Luz's activism continued to increase over time and took place in wider and wider arenas. For Luz, teaching and learning happened both within and outside of classroom walls and involved students, parents, other teachers, administrators, community leaders, and policy-makers.

The unanticipated element of this study was that for the year in which I observed Luz, her school had been labeled academically unacceptable. No one at the school was untouched by this designation due to the deficit view of the state and district imposed on the entire school community. The opportunity to observe the school during the year it was classified into and defined by this category yielded first hand information about the negative impact of the Texas accountability system on Luz, other teachers, the administration, and the students. Another surprise was Luz's everyday ongoing activism necessitated by issues that have continued to plague bilingual education and her work with CLD students for decades. Three major issues included the hegemony of English, high stakes testing's impact on CLD students, and deficit perspectives of CLD students. On a daily basis, Luz dealt with matters that ranged from making sure the LPAC was informed when making decisions about ELLs' school placement to pressuring the school librarian to increase the number of Spanish books offered at the annual book fair.

In order to capture and organize Luz's 28 years of professional experiences, as well as her early schooling, I viewed her trajectory through Chicana/Latina feminist theories, thus "bridging . . . Chicana/Latina feminist perspectives with education" (Villenas et al., 2006, p. 1). Her experiences and narratives (re)member, (re)discover, and (re)store the connections among theories gleaned from her everyday living, her ways of knowing, and her dreams of transformation for a better world. According to Villenas et al., "Very little research . . . paints nuanced and complex portraits of Chicana/Latina lives from which we can consider their cultural/gendered perspectives, resources, and resilience in interaction with institutions of power (i.e., schools, universities, adult

education programs, hospitals, social service agencies)" (p. 6). Luz offered a unique perspective on the complexities teachers of color faced in forming subjectivities forged by external and internal forces.

Threads that connected implicit and explicit cultural values and impacted and guided her inside and outside the classroom through particular times and spaces were interwoven in her narratives and actions. The conclusions drawn from the study bound together these topical threads to illustrate major themes. This final chapter, then, discusses the general significant findings of the study and the themes that emerged via the data, and places them within a theoretical frame of Chicana/Latina feminist pedagogies and a socio-cultural definition of identity and agency. Next, implications regarding the recruitment, retention, preservice, and inservice training of teachers of CLD students will be drawn from Luz's narratives and pedagogical practices within her figured worlds of the classroom, school, district, state, and nation. Completing the chapter, I will point out areas that I believe merit further research and make clear the limitations of the study.

The Toolkit of an Activist Chicana *Educadora*

During her college years, Luz began to self-identify as a Chicana. However, it took several years of heuristic development in her professional trajectory for her to bring together and embody the tri-part identities of activist, Chicana, and *educadora*. Susana, Luz's fellow teacher for many years and later her principal, explained how she saw Luz transition from a traditional, quiet teacher in her early years to an outspoken, non-traditional advocate for ELLs:

> Luz would go with whatever the program was. Over the years she's become more of an activist because later she was making presentations at school board meetings and now she's president of the local bilingual education group. She's doing a lot of legislative stuff. She was quiet. She was from a small town and pretty much accepted the norm. Then, she challenged the traditional and dominant-norm discourse and so that translates to her teaching. (Interview, Suzana, June 13, 2009)

At our historical moment, schools must prepare students from diverse backgrounds to become informed participants in the U.S. democratic process. It can be a difficult task for both ELL students and their teachers to make sense of their own and others ways of living and learning. As a MABE, Luz drew from her funds of knowledge that included culture and language to educate children in the process of constructing themselves through multiple and shifting identities by preparing an environment that embraced their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. González's (2001) study of Mexican-origin families in Tucson emphasized**:**

> Rather than an indictment of either household practices or school practices, we must search for mutually educative processes that draw on the *funds of knowledge* that both households and schools possess. (p. xxi)

Luz brought together her funds of knowledge*,* the Montessori method, and an additive education design of dual language programs as the way to academic excellence for linguistic minority students; she accepted the complexity of language intersected by politics, economics, and identities. (González, 2001; Zentella, 1997). She knew that discord between home and school knowledge could disrupt learning, but she strove throughout her teaching career to prevent this potential conflict from affecting her students through careful engagement of the triad of teacher, students, and parents (Zentella, 1997). Susana, Luz's colleague for over two decades, related:

> She really values the family and was real adamant about how she works with the family . . . families of the kids and how she really believed in native language instruction. I learned pretty quickly that she was from Bordertown and was a Spanish speaker before she went to school. So she pretty much had experienced a lot of the obstacles of the kids that she was teaching. And she was just real proud to be who she was. She wasn't an assimilated Mexicana; she was just a very authentic kind of person that was proud of who she was. I wasn't familiar at the time with the term, but she had a real assets-based philosophy of kids–the funds of knowledge that Moll talks about, all of that. You know before I even really studied and knew about those researchers and that kind of work, she was at the forefront. She didn't know either that that was what she was doing but she really exemplified that whole concept of funds of knowledge that Luis Moll talks about. (Interview, Susana, June 13, 2008)

Susana recognized that Luz's storytelling contained meaning, not only as a personal history, but also as part of Luz's approach to teaching and understanding her student's and their families.

My analysis identified four factors of Luz's toolkit that enabled her to incorporate the personal and the professional while she navigated and negotiated her multiple worlds: knowing through autobiographical consciousness; valuing language and culture; connecting with parents; and advocating for ELL students. The tools were not mutually exclusive, but were used synergistically depending on the situation and its context.

Knowing through Autobiographical Consciousness

Luz expressed her *conocimiento* in her narratives and actions. Her ways of knowing demonstrated an awareness of who she was and how she fit in her world. The analysis revealed the complexity of her multiple identities, the context in which she is and has been embedded, and her reflexivity contributing to a certain awareness, an autobiographical consciousness. I have defined autobiographical consciousness as an evolving awareness of power, position, and privilege; of the historical legacies of

oppression and discrimination; and of contradictions and conflicts that arise from existing in multiple contexts. My definition drew from Freire's *conscientizacão,* Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, and historical consciousness (see Illustration 2 below).

Illustration 2. Autobiographical Consciousness

Autobiographical consciousness is not a new term. It has been studied in philosophy, psychology, neurology, and other disciplines. I have simply brought the term to the field of education to explain the dialectic and dialogical nature of Luz's choices and to present her as a moral and political decision-maker.

Conscientizacão or critical consciousness explained Luz's awareness of position, power, and privilege. As an *educadora*, she created conditions for students and parents to "[read] the world and the word" (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Freire (2000) explained, "Teachers and students . . . co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-

creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators" (p. 69). As an activist *educadora*, Luz's critical consciousness helped her decide what to do and what not to do in certain places and at certain times. She made these decisions ever cognizant of her ultimate goal: to (re)create education for CLD students.

Anzaldúa (1999) describing her concept of *mestiza* consciousness, discussed a multiplicity of complex and overlapping notions. She foregrounded living in ambiguous and conflictual spaces, transborder crossings, and multiple, situational identities. Delgado Bernal (1998) explained, "The term *mestiza* has come to mean a new Chicana consciousness that straddles cultures, races, languages, nations, sexualities, and spiritualities–that is, living with ambivalence while balancing opposing powers" (p. 91). Luz exhibited an awareness that embodied resilience and resistance. Her trajectory illustrated the heuristic development of her multiple identities in the midst of ambiguity (Elenes et al., 2001).

The Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at the University of British Columbia stated, "Historical consciousness can thus be defined as individual and collective understanding of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors which shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understanding to those of the present and the future."[28] Luz's historical consciousness reflected an awareness of her being a part of history as opposed to being ahistorical, or lacking an historical perspective.

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[28] http://www.cshc,ubc.ca/about.php Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, University of British Columbia

Although there have been variations on the meaning of historical consciousness, the term could be understood as an awareness of unique historical circumstances that have affected the choices we have made concerning values, language, and meaning (Holston, 2007).

The trinity of consciousnesses, *conscientizacão,* mestiza consciousness, and historical consciousness, aligned and contributed an array of elements toward creating the holistic construct of autobiographical consciousness. Luz's narratives of her schooling and growing up years were a looking back and interpreting of those experiences based on language, class, gender, and ethnicity/race. When recollecting her past she stated, "I didn't know it then, but I know it now." I interpret this statement to mean that she understood the multiple levels of her past and present situations in terms of professional and personal events. Hence, her experiences and reflexivity led her to become a change agent in the field of bilingual education. Autobiographical consciousness posits that if we do not know who we were, we cannot know who we are and what we can become.

Part of an educator's work is to be critically aware of the issues and the purposes of schooling. Based on examined political and moral principles, it is possible to problematize what went on in the past and use this awareness for transformation in the present and for the future. Cummins (1994) stated:

> In culturally diverse societies, a central goal of education should be to create interactional contexts where educators and students can critically examine issues of identity and experience and collaboratively deconstruct the myths that are inherited from one generation to the next . . . For educators to create an educational context with their students where the assumptions and lies underlying

> dominant group identity become the focus of scrutiny rather than the invisible screen that determines perception is to challenge the societal power structure. Educational equity requires no less. (p. 153)

Luz's continually evolving autobiographical consciousness allowed her to navigate the multiple borders of language and culture (Anzaldúa, 1999) that shaped Luz's life to become an activist Chicana *educadora*.

Valuing Language and Culture

Those with the ultimate goal of educational excellence for linguistic minority children must "come to grips with the complex and pervasive role of language in students' lives in ways that make them feel positive about what they know and enthusiastic about what they can learn" (Zentella, 1997, p. 283). For the past several years, researchers (Gee, 1996; Moraes, 1996; Nieto, 2008) have made connections between language and culture; the investigations made clear that language and culture are not separate entities and that they affect schooling (Nieto, 2002). As Susana explained:

> She's got a deep understanding of the fact that you can know and operate and function in two languages and she promotes that wherever she goes. She promotes that philosophy of native language instruction and in addition she recognizes the need for rigorous English instruction as well for those children. What Luz now understands, I think because it's very evident in her practice, you can't educate children that have a diverse culture and linguistic background the same way that you do in a traditional classroom because there's so much difference. Actually I think when you talk to her, you realize that she's come to the realization that it's good for all the kids. I mean all kinds of kids flourish in her classroom. She's got English-speaking children that are learning Spanish. She realizes that the capacity to learn is there for every person. (Interview, Susana, 6/13/2008)

Luz's proficiency in and love of Spanish linked with her cultural resources reinforced her high regard for the language and respect for her students' home culture. This translated

into Luz's activism inside and outside of the classroom in promoting and providing dual language programs that she considered imperative for the educational equity and academic success of CLD students.

Luz's commitment to learning and maintaining two languages has not diminished over her years of teaching. However, for her it was not simply a linguistic proposition. It was about valuing who you were: *El que habla dos idiomas, vale por dos* (The one who knows two languages is worth double). She fundamentally believed that the additive bilingual education she practiced in her classroom would lead each of her students to be *bien educado*, to be academically successful, to maintain her or his home language, and to acquire English. A cultural value that Luz articulates clearly was *ser bien educado* (to be well educated). For Luz, it involved *responsibilidad* (responsibility) and *respeto* (respect), as well as children's behavior as a reflection on the honor of the family in the community (Galindo & Olguín, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). In this educational endeavor, Luz formed relationships, not only with her students, but also with their parents.

Connecting with Parents

My very first interview with Luz (Fall 2004) took place in her classroom on a Saturday between parent conferences. She talked about how much she enjoyed the chance to talk with her students' parents and described the conference she had right before I arrived:

> Well, the one right when you came in. We were having a real heavy-duty discussion. And the reason is this child last year had a very low self-esteem. The parents were not happy with what happened to the child in kinder. And so they had a lot of things to say. I mean they were making me feel good and they were saying how they were seeing a big difference between the time that school started

> and now. And how the child is very happy. And how last year the child didn't want to hear anything about school. Did not want to do anything. Their communication with the teacher was not positive. So it wasn't going real well last year at all. They've seen a big growth in just this first nine weeks. And that's what his parents were focusing on is that I can teach him. And that was what they were telling me, "Ms. Ruiz if you can teach him everything he should have learned in kinder in one month we are very grateful." (Interview, October 9, 2004)

In this parent-teacher conference, the Spanish-speaking parents of the child exhibited *confianza*, an aspect of the respectful interpersonal relationships that Luz fostered with all her students' parents. Both parties recognized the reciprocity of the relationship and had certain expectations of conduct: the parents felt respected and that Luz cared about their child. Luz expected and received support from the parents for the student's academics and behavior. It was important to note that language was not a barrier to communication; yet, communication between Luz and her students' parents was more than a mere language issue. Susana pointed out:

> She's very, very inclusive - and that's one thing that I've always admired about her - inclusive of the parent community. She really does capitalize on their strength. She always, always brings in the parents. It's amazing, amazing how she is able to relate to the community and bring these parents in to support what's going on in the classroom (Interview, Suzana, June 13, 2008)

Luz realized from her own experiences how different her CLD pupils' contexts of family and home could be from the school environment. Additionally, the knowledge that children bring to the classroom from home may be quite distinct from the knowledge emphasized by public education. Luz drew from her personal knowledge to affirm and value the kind of cultural and social capital that she, her students, and their parents shared based on *educación*. Over the years she has honed her skills to communicate with

her students' parents or caretakers through home visits, telephone calls, parent conferences, school community walks, and parent meetings. During the very first parent meeting of the school year 2007-2008, she gave the parents her home telephone number and told them to call her anytime they had any questions. Of course, the majority of her communication with the parents was in Spanish. As Zentella (1997) noted:

> The first step toward achieving bilingual excellence requires being open to linguistic and cultural differences without blaming the community's limited education or impoverishment on those differences, or interpreting them as signs of parental lack of concern for their children's progress. (p. 279)

Instead of blaming the students or their parents for "lacking" English, education, or economic means, Luz recognized and respected the families' strengths. The relationships developed between Luz and her parents do not end with the school year. As her colleague of 11 years at three different schools, Ruth, explained:

> I think she has great relationships with her parents. I mean her parents come back from after their child has moved on the following year to two years, three years down the line. She just builds this great rapport with her parents that they don't stop coming back. They come back and talk to her about their child and get her input on how they can help their child, if they are not doing well with the TAKS test and stuff and get ideas on what they can do. (Interview, Ruth, July 15, 2008)

Nevertheless, Ruth believed that Luz has had difficulty in separating the professional and the personal. Ruth saw this as a problem. According to her:

> Sometimes I think she goes a little too far. (laughs) There is a fine line with being professional and being personal with parents. I understand that you build a relationship and especially if they keep coming back year after year to talk to you but then there is your professional side where you have to draw the line. So I think she has a hard time doing that, because she is so passionate and she loves her kids. (Interview, Ruth, July 15, 2008)

Ruth postulated that Luz's crossing that "fine line" caused Luz to be involved in difficult situations that many teachers would have avoided. However, Ruth also recognized the integrity of Luz's advocacy fueled by her caring and passion.

Advocating for Latina/o Students and Community

As Luz has stated in her narratives at different times, she felt a *responsibilidad* to speak up and at least attempt to do something when she encountered unjust situations involving Latina/o students and parents. However, this extended beyond her present and former students to include students whom she had never taught. She inculcated an activist perspective wherein community service and uplift took precedence over her own individual gain (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Urrieta, 2009). As a beneficiary of Luz's advocacy, Ana, a former student at Martinez Elementary, spoke about how Luz affected her life:

> Although I was not a direct student of Ms. Ruiz, she was like a mentor, someone that helped guide me and other students. What most affected me about that relationship is her coming to our home to meet with me and my family in sixth grade because I was going to junior high and letting me know and basically guiding me through all the steps of applying for this magnet program. I had no idea, and my family had no idea, that this magnet program was just down the street from where we lived (laughs). And I had no idea that it existed. I thought it was another town that she was referring to. So she guided us through that whole process. I remember it just amazed me, you know, her commitment, and I'm not even her student and she came to our home and the neighborhood isn't the most comfortable for everybody to be able to just go. (Interview, Ana, September 2, 2008)

Ana felt that Luz's intervention was the turning point in her educational career and her family's life. When Ana graduated from college several years later, she "went

straight to let her [Luz] know [she was] graduating college (laughs).” Ana also credited Luz with influencing her parents to become community activists.

> We always remember her and have kept in contact with her. Ms. Ruiz had lots of faith and patience with all of us. And I was . . . I mean I was kind of having all of these things going on in my home. I was probably not the easiest kid (laughs) to have to deal with. I don't think I was too too bad, but, you know, I would resist and I would get in trouble from time to time. But anyhow she was very patient and she walked me through that process and I got into the magnet program. And that's really where a lot of things began changing for me. (Interview, Ana, September 12, 2008)

Ana’s recollections highlighted Luz’s passion for her work, which was formed by her personal experiences and her cultural knowledge and which fueled the authentically caring relationships (Valenzuela, 1999) that have been essential to her practice.

Ruth, her colleague, pointed out how Luz’s commitment and activism were sometimes misunderstood and led to conflicts with other teachers. Ruth’s comments highlight that others may have felt threatened by Luz’s knowledge of issues and policies that affect CLD students.

> She is very passionate about teaching and about bilingual education and what’s best for bilingual students. So I think that’s part of the conflict that she does have on campuses. She is so strongly passionate about what she does, educating students and everything. A lot of teachers are but they are not that fully passionate. I mean she goes to TEA meetings and stuff where other bilingual teachers just do what the district tells them to do or they do whatever they feel is right. They’re not passionate enough to go talk to TEA or see about what the new TEKS are going to be or anything like that. She comes across as being this really strong, strong personality and her way is the right way to do it and their way is wrong. But knowing her, that’s not how she means to come across. She is just very passionate. She’s done her research. (Interview, Ruth, July 15, 2008)

Although Luz’s advocacy at times produced conflict with her peers and administrators, she continued her activism serving students, parents, and the community. In her

narratives, Luz expressed her reliance on social and cultural capital to sustain her as she engaged in the conflicts and struggles for fairness and equity on behalf of CLD students. Luz's commitment to "undertake Chicana and Chicano community-oriented responsibilities" (Urrieta, 2009, p. 96) could be traced to points in her narratives as her identity shifted from Mexican to Chicana to activist *educadora* (Urrieta, 2009).

To be an activist Chicana *educadora* involves action. Anyon (2005) stated, "People are radicalized by actually participating in contentious politics" (p. 170). Luz's trajectory reflected her participation in the controversial proposition of providing an enriched, additive bilingual education for CLD students. As Urrieta (2009) found, "The practices and activities of the Chicana and Chicano figured world in dealing with societal and institutional racism and discrimination enabled activist agency" (p. 128). Luz's activist agency drew from her autobiographical consciousness and personal cultural resources. They mediated her daily practices of relationship building, commitment to community, and advocacy. Luz's toolkit, which consisted of knowing through autobiographical consciousness, valuing language and culture, connecting with parents, and advocating for Latina/o students and community provided her with the means to make strategic decisions to empower herself, her students, and their parents.

Luz: Guiding Light[29] for Lessons Learned

Luz operated daily in hotly contested figured worlds. She implemented a Montessori-based dual language model in her classroom, while the district seemed to

[29] I use the term "guiding light" to reflect the Montessori concept that the teacher guides the students in their learning and Luz's name, which means "light."

promote an early exit bilingual educational model. Luz faced lived experiences that shaped her identity making, which in turn, impacted her "moment to moment" agency (Urrieta, 2009). Her story revealed the influence of early life experiences and the historical legacy of Mexicans in Texas on the trajectory of her personhood and, ultimately, her ways of knowing and pedagogical practice. Sociocultural and Chicana feminist perspectives of identity production and agency, as well as the constructs of figured worlds and funds of knowledge informed my analysis of her life history and participant observations.

In my analysis of the data, four themes arose: *comunidad* (community), *conflicto* (conflict), *conocimiento con cariño* (knowing through caring), and *poder* (power/to be able). *Comunidad*, the first theme, focused on building relational networks that supported and encouraged Luz inside and outside the classroom. The second theme, *conflicto*, addressed the multiple and competing discourses Luz encountered and the ever-present borders that she continually traversed. *Conocimiento con cariño* incorporated a relational and compassionate way of knowing students and parents. The last theme, *poder*, reflected Luz's determination and empowerment as an activist Chicana *educadora*.

Comunidad

The people who have supported and encouraged Luz within her social networks were threaded throughout her narratives, which reflected an aspect of funds of knowledge involving networks and reciprocity within a community for survival with dignity (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992). Luz talked about the network of creative and

resourceful people with whom she exchanged information with, as well as those who have helped her and those whom she has helped through small and large exchanges.

Her experience of leaving home to attend college right after her high school graduation in the northern part of Texas revealed how important it was for her to get support from her social network to find the courage to leave her family to pursue higher education.

> I had these girlfriends that kind of helped me be brave, to become real brave because I was scared. I was scared because I was going real far away from home and it was a real lonely year for me because I was so far from home and in a different, totally different, environment because I was so used to Mexicanos and over there it was not like that. (Interview, October 12, 2004)

Luz's friends backed and encouraged her in the decision to leave the community to pursue college. Perhaps out of necessity, life in her border community fostered reciprocity through favors given without any immediate expectation of return. In Luz's life growing up in Bordertown, the exchanges of information and other needed assistance were constants. Interwoven into Luz's values was supporting the well-being of the family and extended group, no matter the manner. These notions have remained with her throughout her life.

During college and as a teacher, she has actively and consciously built formal and informal networks in school and out of school. One example of this was the previously discussed group she formed called the Salsa Sisters. This informal group of bilingual teachers in her school district came together once a month in classrooms and restaurants to share ideas and stories, professional and personal. The year of the study I observed that Luz continued to grow her networks. She reestablished the local bilingual education

association, which had been dormant for three years in order to have a larger base to support the teachers and students. She was elected its president at the first meeting on December 12, 2007. At the January meeting of 2008, Luz said,

> Let me tell you a little story. There was a bilingual education teacher that worked very hard at her school. She worked on the LPAC and CAC [Campus Advisory Council] and advocated for her students. She realized that to be truly effective she needed to work with others. I want to declare that I want to be an effective president because I want to build partnerships to advocate for bilingual students. (Field notes, January 23, 2008)

Luz understood the importance of each individual's efforts to improve the education of CLD students, and because of her sense of *comunidad* she also realized the importance of working collectively given the struggles and challenges of modern bilingual education. To this end, Luz flung her *red* (net) to include educators regardless of race/ethnicity, language, or position. Ruth, a white colleague in regular education, spoke of her experiences with Luz as they progressed from being acquaintances to friends.

> At first it was just an acquaintance. We were at totally opposite ends of the buildings and didn't see each other much except at faculty meetings and things like that. Then she started doing training, and I became interested in the Montessori style. So she became like a mentor as far as how you use those types of materials and that philosophy of teaching. And then just through that and seeing her more on a regular basis, friendship grew. I'd still say, friendship, mentor, I mean, it went both ways. (Interview, Ruth, July 15, 2008)

Ruth and Luz purposely decided to pursue National Board Certification at the same time. They did purposefully in order to support one another through the process. It allowed for mutual encouragement and for further honing of their pedagogical skills. Ruth explained:

> We would support each other through the process in that we both failed the first time. And that was kind of good. (laughs) We were able to support each other to go ahead and go through the second time and she passed and I didn't, but she was there for me for the third time, 'til I was eventually able to succeed. So she really helped and supported me in that way, encouragement and everything. So I think our friendship grew stronger as the years went by. (Interview, Ruth, July 15, 2008)

Luz's networks comprised professional and personal relationships that did not create dichotomies in her life. Rather, her associations with colleagues, fellow teachers, community members, district administrators, school board members, parents, and former students operated more as continuums. Professional acquaintances developed into friends, mentors became mentees, and students evolved into colleagues. For Luz, *comunidad* signified relational sharing that provided avenues for her advocacy, as well as for her quest toward empowerment and educational equity. Ruth continued:

> She is very willing to share whatever she's learned with the campus. Like when she went to the TEA meeting about the new TEKS and shared with everybody and gave information. People see her willing to share. She gives information, important information that is needed, in how to help or to stop something that's wrong from going through, and who to email or write, that type of thing. She's so passionate about what she is doing, and her beliefs, and the bilingual students and their education. (Interview, Ruth, July 15, 2008)

Luz's passion for providing an effective and equitable schooling environment for her students pushed her toward actively seeking out support, affirmation, and encouragement by joining or forming informal and formal groups. Her affiliations helped lessen her sense of isolation and provided interactions that contributed to the heuristic development of her identities as a Chicana, an activist, a Montessorian, and a bilingual education teacher. Luz utilized her networks to create counterstories and counterspaces that supported her pedagogical practices and shaped her identity making.

Conflicto

Despite network support and community building, Luz continued to confront borders of race, ethnicity, language, and gender. As a transborder crosser, that is, one who is engaged in a back-and-forth movement between conflicting discourses, she has been an actor in an array of figured worlds. Making sense of herself and others in the worlds she has inhabited reflected the conflicts that have influenced her identity production and impacted her educational philosophy, practice, and pedagogy.

Luz has taught in Texas, a state that has had an auditing mentality with a strong emphasis on accountability (McNeil, 2005; Valenzuela, 2005). Additionally, she has been teaching in a district with language strategies of an early transitional bilingual education program and the intention of moving the students into English as soon as possible. Through her work in combining the enrichment bilingual education model of dual language and Montessori in her public school classroom, Luz has been a constant border-crosser of the competing discourses of subtractive and additive education. On a daily basis, she has experienced the conflictual and ambiguous spaces that Anzaldúa (1999) spoke about when "living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity" (p 19). Concerning her work in the public schools using the Montessori method, Luz pointed out:

> When I'm at the public schools, I'm seen as a Montessori teacher that does things differently in the classroom. When I'm with Montessori teachers, I'm seen as a public school teacher who doesn't do the method completely. (Interview, November 8, 2004)

Luz's adaption of the Montessori method for her CLD students in a public school classroom was an example of one of the multiple spaces fraught with contradictions and tensions (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, and Álvarez, 2001) that Luz has inhabited because national, district, and school policies are not equipped to acknowledge, evaluate, or appreciate her Montessori-based dual language approach.

Luz's transborder crossings entailed more than educational methods and pedagogies. She has lived within cultural borderlands and experienced "the effects of multiple colonizations — including the Spanish legacy, United States imperialism, Mexican nationalism and global patriarchy and heterosexism" (Elenes et al., 2001, p. 598). These multiple colonizations created spaces filled with conflict but also possibility. In this space Luz struggled with assumptions and beliefs that had been co-constructed socially and historically.

Luz's life journey has been about rethinking learning and teaching to create new meanings of who she is and what she does which has resulted in her gaining new perspectives on her pupils and others. There had been times when it felt like a very lonely process for Luz. She related the following experience she had at a Pecan Elementary staff meeting centered upon discussing TAAS scores during her first year at the campus:

> I had just come. I did not know the system of bilingual education at this campus. I asked if you can break that down and tell me where the LEP [limited English proficient] students fit in? And what percentage is represented by that group, and how are the LEP students doing? I don't even remember what they said because I was so stunned that even the principal didn't know how to answer that question. Yes, I remember thinking, "Oh oh, I am in a very lonely place." (Interview, October 9, 2004)

At the meeting, Luz voiced her concern for the ELLs in the school that had to take the state's high-stakes test. Since this test was given to students in grades three and above, her early childhood students were not directly affected. Yet, she felt compelled to speak out. Luz often found herself in places void of relational caring that felt lonely at times like in this interaction. She felt isolated, even though she interacted with a large group of colleagues everyday. Nevertheless, she strove to be accepted and a part of her community. Belonging or attempts to belong must be added to the equation of Luz's identity making because of the basic need of humans as social beings to locate themselves in their community or world. An example of Luz's small but significant effort to do so is recorded in my field notes, which I took when we attended a state bilingual education conference together:

> Luz and I decided to take a look at the exhibits instead of going to a session. We came to a booth that had an array of painted wooden items for teachers. At the booth, she bought board/chart tablet pointers for each of the teachers at her grade level that consisted of a two-foot long wooden dowel and an apple at the end. She had to make a special trip back to pick up the pointers at the Exhibit Hall in order for the vendor to paint the names of each teacher on the apples. (Field notes, October 4, 2007)

My reflection on that day concerned how Luz wanted to be accepted by her fellow teachers and how the issue of belonging played a role in her conflicts.

At times, Luz was torn between her activism and what the administration and other teachers thought about her. She expressed that she wanted to be accepted and respected. However, she was also aware that her actions and words led her to be identified as an outlier. Nevertheless, she was compelled to speak up and not just comply

with the status quo. Her worries about what the principal thought of her were expressed in my field notes:

> At lunch, Luz was telling me that the president of the PTA went around to talk with all the teachers. The PTA president did an informal survey because there is a lot of talk about teachers leaving because of all the stress. This group of parents presented their findings to the principal two days ago. Luz doesn't know how these things are going to come out. But she is worried that the principal is thinking that she is the one that instigated the whole thing because she has a reputation of working with parents to advocate for different issues. (Field Notes, November 8, 2007)

Luz's reputation as a troublemaker was the misguided outcome of her peers' judgment of her advocacy and activities on behalf of CLD students and their parents. As committed as she has been to speak up for the students she has served, Luz has displayed ambivalence about her troublemaker identity.

During our interviews and conversations, many times it seemed her narrations were stories of justifications of her pedagogical philosophy and practice that were performed not for me alone, but for others as well, including administrators, teachers, and parents (Madison, 1998; Villenas, 2005). She emphasized that the way she ran her classroom was based on best practices (Zemelman, 1993), not just on Montessori principles. Nonetheless, as her friend, past principal, and former fellow teacher, Susana pointed out:

> Well the only thing that I would want to mention that I hope you picked up on is that its just like any other person that's a little bit outside of the box, so to speak. They are never a prophet in their own land, you know what I am saying? And I don't think she gets enough credit for what capacity she has as an educator. People that really find a lot of the answer, it has a tendency to kind of scare people away almost. Because the practice is almost too good, you know? You go into the classroom and there's so much order and there's so much productivity,

> and yet it's just not real parallel with what's going on in terms of the accountability system right now. (Interview, Susana, June 13, 2008)

From Susana's point-of-view, Luz's practice was almost too good and that intimidated other teachers. Susana pointed out that Luz wanted to do what was best for the second-language learners whom she served and did not intend to alienate her peers. From a year of conversations and observations in the teachers' lounge and at staff and grade level meetings, it was apparent that Luz's practice did run counter to how other teachers in the school conducted their classes. Yet, Luz persisted and was largely allowed to run her classroom in the manner she felt was most appropriate for optimal learning for her CLD students. However, Luz's awareness of the pedagogical differences between herself and others was expressed in narratives, which sought validation for how she ran her classroom.

Luz was determined to teach underserved children in a language they understood, and to help them maintain that language and learn English. The incongruence between her personal cultural knowledge and the mainstream, traditional educational system pushed her to develop a philosophy and practice that arose out of understandings of her personal and professional identities. She saw herself as an effective MABE, the students as powerful and capable learners, and their parents as partners as well as cultural resources in the educational process. Her views affected her pedagogy of educating the whole child and contrasted often with mainstream practices concerned with preparing students for high-stakes testing. Over the years her growing critical awareness combined

with her relational caring led her to find spaces within the system in which she could act as a change agent.

Conocimiento con Cariño

Conocimiento con cariño (a relational, caring way of knowing) arises from an awareness of the historical, social, political, and ethical aspects of the teacher, students, and community relationship (Cozart & Gordon, 2006). I have used *conocimiento con cariño* to highlight Luz's perspective of encompassing the cognitive, emotional and social aspects of education in "existing power relations such as race, culture, and social class" (Cozart & Gordon, 2006, p. 11). An important part of Luz's practice was to engage in a dialogic process with her students, their parents, and the community. Her relationship building was enhanced by her proficiency in Spanish and driven by her concern for appropriate pedagogies of CLD students.

Pedagogy is influenced and impacted by the culture of measurement and the culture of engagement (Padilla, 2005). Padilla explained that these two very different and sometimes conflictual epistemological perspectives could be clarified by the Spanish words *saber* and *conocer*. Although both are defined as "to know," s*aber* is objectivist from a culture of measurement, while *conocer* is relational from a culture of engagement (Padilla, 2005). Padilla and others have emphasized the dominance of the culture of measurement in regard to accountability, which has significantly impacted the nature of schooling (McNeil, 2005; Padilla, 2005; Valenzuela, 2005). According to Padilla, the epistemological perspective reflected in *saber* has led to a cultural construction wherein, "teaching becomes highly decontextualized from larger pedagogical concerns. This can

be seen in schooling practices such as teaching to the test and in the overemphasis on process, credentialism, and test-taking competence" (p. 250). In contrast to the prevalent obsession with test scores, Luz operated from a perspective concerned with relationship. Luz expressed the importance she placed on caring when she narrated the following observation about her students' response to her:

> That one day, it almost seemed like they realized that I was going to put in all this effort. It's almost as if they realized that I really cared for them. It was like-this teacher cares-this teacher is going to teach me what I need. (Interview, October 9, 2004)

Luz actively fostered relationships with her students and their parents. Some of these relationships have continued for many years after students have left her classroom. While this is consistent with her funds of knowledge, it is at odds with the current accountability system wherein educational institutions rely on the results of one test to evidence the "success" of a student's entire academic year, the school itself, and the district.

Luz's career trajectory has been about navigating and negotiating the fine line of relying on analytic evidence and engaging in emotional relationship (Luttrell, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999). Luz realized early in her career that traditional instructional strategies were not particularly effective for her students. Additionally, she wanted to feel comfortable with the way she delivered instruction.

Her c*onocimiento con cariño* combined with *compasión* (compassion) guided her to adopt the Montessori method because it offered a way to synthesize her knowing and caring and adapt that to a bilingual education public school classroom. Thich Nhat Hanh,

a Buddhist spiritual leader, defined the term compassion as the desire to relieve and transform the suffering of another person to lighten sorrows (Ellsberg, 2001)). Luz's *compasión* was evidenced by her wish to meaningfully include the students' and her own cultural values and resources in the learning environment. Susana, Luz's colleague, noted:

> She has always been very compassionate, and I think that comes from her background because I think when she went to school she struggled like that. She was one of those kids that didn't speak English and looked poor and looked very Mexican. So I think a lot of these experiences with children that struggle . . . well because people make these assumptions about their capacity and take a deficit view. But she's very compassionate and she really does capitalize on their strength. (Interview, Susana, June 13, 2008)

Luz's caring for her students seemed rooted in her own struggles against others' assumptions about her as a Spanish-speaking student with a Mexican phenotype. Her experiences growing up impacted her pedagogy of acknowledging and valuing what the students brought from home to school. The following narrative depicted her compassionate sensitivity to her students:

> I did go through different types of things that we put children through–like I went through an assertive discipline program. That's the one with the marbles. You throw in the marbles if they are being good. You put the children's names on the board [if they are misbehaving]. I remember the very first time I did that. I guess I've always been real sensitive to children's needs and how I affect them. I remember the very first time that a child cried because the child's name was on the board with I don't know how many checks. I remember feeling so horrible and I know that made me remember an incident when I was little. You know, it's like I would tie things with things that happened to me as a child that I felt like-I cannot be doing this to these children. (Interview, November 25, 2004)

Her autobiographical consciousness allowed her to analyze and learn from subtractive school experiences in her own childhood and transform potentially negative moments in

the lives of her students to additive, affirming educational experiences. Above all, she wanted to provide a caring, nurturing environment for her students. Connecting the present with the past has contributed to her *conocimiento con cariño* and *compasión,* as well as to her emphasis on relationship. A politicization of intimacy (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002) kept her in the classroom and committed to working for the common good (Cozart & Gordon, 2006; González & Padilla, 2008). That is, her relationships were not meant only for personal socializing; they were also dedicated to empowering change within a system when it did not meet the needs of children.

Poder

Poder functions as two distinct words in Spanish. The verb, *poder*, can be translated as "to be able." *El poder*, also, is a noun that means "power." Luz's narratives have reflected both words when she expressed her own determination and the importance of empowerment for herself, as well as her students and their parents. She narrated events where she felt powerful, as well as those in which she experienced being disempowered and documented her determination in her work within the educational system.

Throughout the span of her career, Luz has navigated and negotiated constraints and barriers manifested in laws, policies, procedures, and practices that have impacted the past and continue in the present. This has placed her in such a position, similar to other activist Chicana educators, that "when asked to acquiesce or mediate, they may choose to maintain a sense of personal, social and political integrity that may result in a form of resistance" (Arce, 2004, p. 232). I agree with Arce's observations and analyses,

but have chosen to use the term "transformational determination" in place of resistance to describe an approach of acting for something, rather than only acting against something. Luz explained how she worked for something when she managed to attend North State University and graduate with her degree. Her tenacity and determination have also been evident in her decision to dedicate decades of her life to the classroom:

> Well, I was real determined. I've always been that type of person, And I encourage my students to do this-that if I say . . . if I ever say, "you can't," which I hardly ever do, but if I do . . . I always tell my kids that if anyone ever says, "you can't," you have to challenge them. Because there is really no such thing depending on what they are talking about. There is always something you can do to try to get to where they think you can't. And to me, I always remember thinking "Oh, so that person thinks I can't do it." You know, I don't know if that's good for me, but I think in the long run, I think I just wanted to show people that I was capable, that I had the ability to do more than what they believed I could. (Interview, October 12, 2008)

In her life, Luz has encountered various situations that and persons who have discouraged her either covertly or overtly. Rather than accept "you can't," she operated from the position of "yes, I can." She worked diligently to instill that same attitude in the children within her classroom.

Nevertheless, she chronicled events in which she felt powerless. The ending of Hill's dual language program was an especially poignant moment *sin poder* (without power) for her. Luz's devastation directly related to the tremendous effort she had made to implement the dual language program, as well as to her unsuccessful fight for the program's survival. Another moment *sin poder* took place at a State Board of Education subcommittee charged with developing new English Language Arts Reading standards. Luz wanted to attend the meeting because of her concern about the effects of state

standards on ELLs. I attended the meeting with her and took notes on the proceedings. This meeting was called specifically for the subcommittee to appoint a committee to review the standards document. After much discussion, one of the board members read a list of possible expert reviewers that appeared to have been finalized in advance of the meeting. Then, the following exchange occurred:

> Board Member A: I don't know how you will make your final vote for the committee to review the standards. I don't know if you were listening to Board Member C or Board Member D. Your recommendations don't touch special populations. You have not listed anyone that has worked with ELL and African American students.
>
> Board Member B: The basics of reading and grammar have not changed in 100 years.
>
> Board Member C: It goes further than the document. You need to have reviewers that can address the document. If you want to make a statement for ALL children, then you've got to have the experts that are familiar with the population. This is a diverse population.
>
> Board Member B: We came up with the document that we have now during Bush's initiative. This was a phonics approach. I am glad to say that whole language is a dead issue. We have a lack of skilled teachers coming out of the university. When you have a curriculum that reflects scientific research, then curriculum standards will drive the instruction.
>
> Board Member A: I may be wrong. We still engage in racial overtones. We still need to consider having a diverse committee. We should look at some diversity. People will think that some racial thinking is going on. I am concerned with every child.
> (State Board of Education subcommittee Meeting, February 26, 2008)

The board members obviously had different concerns. The exchange was a stark rejection of the notion that communities of color have funds of knowledge critical in forming education practice and policy for their own children. Although two members, people of color, suggested names of nationally recognized literacy researchers

knowledgeable about ELL and African American issues, the board voted to accept a slate of experts that did not include any of the suggestions. They seemed unwilling to consider other names. The one Latina board member, who mirrored Luz's frustration, said, "I don't know why I wasted hours of my time. This was predetermined. You could have done this on the phone." She slammed down some papers, grabbed her things, and stormed down the aisle in obvious anger. In my field notes' reflections, I wrote:

> Luz felt strongly about going even if it meant leaving her class and taking a personal day. We both felt that our mouths were taped shut as members of the audience cannot say anything during this type of meeting. The audience did clap and shout out after one of Board Member C's impassioned speeches about the diversity of the state needing to be taken into consideration. The chair of the subcommittee angrily told the audience that if we had another outburst, he would empty the room immediately. Talk about being silenced! (Field Notes, February 26, 2008)

This was an example of an event *sin poder*. However, Luz's narratives and actions pointed more often to her sense of empowerment evidenced by her advocacy. In Luz's case, the absence of power (*poder,* the noun) contributed to determination (*poder,* the verb). She has told her students what she has applied to her own life when she stated to them.

> You can't just go along with what the teacher says. The teacher is not the only one that's correct. (Interview, November 15, 2007)

Luz believed that empowerment was possible despite having been placed in positions *sin poder*.

Key Lessons

The Montessori method, Luz's pedagogical approach, employs key lessons to demonstrate major ideas or important concepts for the student. First, the teacher presents

the lesson to the student. Then, the student learns the lesson through practice in the prepared environment with the materials of the lesson with guidance if necessary. Once the concept has been learned, the student takes that specific concept and applies it to different situations.

Important lessons that I consider key arose from Luz's life and long experience in the classroom and indicated cognitive shifts, acquisition of tools to mediate her actions, and identity learning. Her reflections on her experiences provided her with a map for navigating the public school system and could also serve to guide others. Her ways of knowing and ways of teaching formed and transformed over time with her ethnic and professional identities inextricably intertwined through activities in particular social and cultural practices (Urrieta, 2009; Wenger, 1998). Luz chronicled shifts in her participation in the practices of the figured world of bilingual education through acts of remembering and reflecting. This in turn, allowed her to exhibit an autobiographical consciousness that compelled her agentive action to create counterstories, counterspaces, and relevant pedagogical practices. Within Luz's figured worlds where values, ideas, and expectations demarcated visible and invisible borders, she was able to self-author her identities amidst the constraints of others who positioned her (Holland et al., 1998; Nasir & Cook, 2009; Urrieta, 2009). Generally, when the multiple discourses of Luz's figured worlds addressed her, she answered as an activist Chicana *educadora* in the following ways:

1. Luz strove to provide education, not schooling, for CLD students from a Latina/o orientation that valued language and cultural resources.
2. Luz demonstrated an authoritative classroom management style and high expectations for student learning.
3. Luz linked the cognitive, emotional, and social in order to educate the whole child to reach her or his full potential.
4. Luz took responsibility for students' learning.
5. Luz communicated with parents and formed relationships that have lasted through the years.
6. Luz fostered relationship that supported herself and others through sharing and caring.
7. Luz advocated for students, parents, and the larger community from an orientation of social justice and educational equity.
8. Luz positioned herself as a change agent.

Theorists surmise that learning is a cognitive process in addition to a sociocultural one (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vogostky, 1978). Thus, lessons are learned alongside the learning of identities (Wortham, 2006). Luz has learned her key lessons and her identity as an activist Chicana *educadora* through her participation and practice in particular social, cultural, and historical contexts (Nasir & Cooks, 2009; Urrieta, 2009; Wenger, 1998). Her activities in her figured worlds allowed her to practice and learn her lessons to act upon her worlds.

Implications

What lessons can educators learn from Luz's story? What tools can be given to preservice and inservice teachers to effectively educate CLD students? Luz's process of

identity production and agency was "specific to practices and activities situated in historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed 'worlds'"(Holland et al., 1998). Over the years, Luz, an activist Chicana *educadora*, has acquired a toolkit that she has utilized to confront institutional inequity though examination of values and beliefs. Luz's life and work have pointed to possibilities in which teachers could acquire the "tools to challenge a system in which inequity is perpetuated so that they are no longer unconscious of their complicity" (Cozart & Gordeon, 2006, p. 11). Two strategies may have implications for preservice and inservice teachers to help them understand the interconnectedness between learning and identity, as well as provide the possibility for transformation through development of a critical consciousness. Always with the goal of successful educational outcomes for CLD students, these strategies are: (1) fostering autobiographical consciousness and (2) the mentoring of novices by veteran teachers.

Fostering Autobiographical Consciousness

Luz made it clear that the process of telling her story helped her endure a very difficult year. She appreciated having someone who listened to her as she thought out loud about her life trajectory, career events, pedagogical practices, and philosophy of teaching. The narrating process empowered her to persevere in the complicated task of educating CLD students. Teaching has always been a complex endeavor, and especially so for MABEs (Nieto, 2003).

For preservice and inservice teachers, assumptions, beliefs, values, and expectations regarding their life experiences and cultural knowledge are seldom addressed in training. If preservice and inservice teachers were to become

autoethnographers, the process of (re)collecting and remembering their own life histories could create an avenue for nurturing autobiographical consciousness. One complementary activity could entail preservice teachers collecting oral histories from veteran teachers in bilingual education in order not to lose those stories. However, to foster an autobiographical consciousness requires the critical analysis of assumptions and beliefs about bilingualism and biliteracy that is not a simple retelling of life events and stories. It is an interrogation of the intersections of language, ethnicity/race, class, and gender that happens in the construction and reconstruction of interrelated and interdependent professional identities.

The process of dialogue and dialectic through autobiographical and biographical life history narrative might provide a space for self-authoring through the examination of socially and historically constructed values. Holland et al (1998) explained, "We conceive persons as composites of many, often contradictory, self-understandings and identities, whose loci are often not confined to the body but 'spread over the material and social environment' and few of which are completely durable" (p. 8). This refiguring of self and culture brings attention to the concept of multiple selves in process through powerful culturally and socially constructed discourses. Although scholars have advocated for teacher reflection, the body of literature has been geared to White teachers. In contrast, a MABE's awareness specifically requires an understanding of the borders and intersections of context and situation, not as abstract concept, but as everyday realities of the lived experience.

Dialoging could serve as a tool that allows for reflexivity about ontology and epistemology by looking at a collective store of cultural meanings to create new meanings. In practical terms, this could include curricula in bilingual education courses that create opportunities for preservice teachers' reflexivity through interviewing each other about their life history, as well as interviews they could conduct with their own families, veteran teachers, and community members. Students would also be encouraged to reflect on their own lived experiences. Instruction in autobiographical consciousness would add new depth and meaning to these activities by providing a way to look at race/ethnicity, class, gender, and language.

Veteran Teachers Mentoring Novices

Eisner (1992) stated, "Teaching, by and large, in both elementary and secondary schools is a lonely activity. It is not that teachers have no contact with people: after all, they are with students all day. The point is that they have very little contact with other adults in the context of their classrooms" (p. 613). Teachers are left on their own to reflect on the effectiveness of their instruction. Eisner (1992) further argued that since they could not see their own instruction, "teachers unaware of . . . their own performance are in no position to change them" (p. 613). In many cases, teachers who have worked in the classroom for many years seldom stepped into other classrooms to observe how another instructed.

Retired teacher mentors could provide support and guidance without threatening the deeply entrenched norms of teaching or school and district politics. The norms of teaching include little tolerance for assertion of authority over colleagues, as well as the

idea that there should be no status difference among teachers. Mentoring by teachers within the system must contend with these strongly held beliefs (Donaldson, Johnson, Kirkpatrick, Marinell, Steele, & Szczesiul, 2008). School and district politics compromise teacher autonomy when these larger figured worlds force the individual teacher to respond to oppressive monitoring and evaluations. This was made clear in Luz's narratives about visits from district personnel during the year of this study.

Mentoring relationships must also contend with positioning and the perceived risk that novice teachers believe they take when acknowledging that they do not know (Cozart, 1999). Retired teachers, well aware of these circumstances, could help the mentee teacher negotiate and navigate limiting perspectives. If retired teachers, no longer officially a part of the school or district systems, served as mentors, then the challenges presented by these deep-rooted norms (the issue of positioning, along with school and district politics) could be mitigated.

Luz will retire in the near future. To a large extent, her wisdom and life experiences will leave with her. Throughout her life, she has valued being mentored and mentoring. When Luz and other master teachers retire from the classroom, it should not put an end to their participation in the mentoring process. Bilingual education cannot afford to lose their expertise or historical knowledge. Retired teachers' familiarity with the multiplicity of challenges that MABEs face is needed to support new bilingual education teachers. My study of Luz has led me to recommend that retired teachers not only could help new teachers develop additive pedagogical practices, but also keep them from feeling overwhelmed and isolated.

Further Research

More person-centered ethnographies of bilingual educators' classroom lives are imperative because it is particularly important to record their narratives and observe their practices; research is needed to study bilingual education teachers in their own words, from their point-of-view, and within their teaching contexts. According to Eisner (1992), "Both curriculum and pedagogy need to be seen in context and both need attention for strengthening school reform" (p. 624). Their stories and descriptions could guide and inform preservice teachers about effectively teaching in two languages. Primarily, such research would provide a basis for initiating critical and thoughtful analysis of bilingual education and its various models.

An immediate concern is for studies to capture the narratives of *las veteranas* (veterans) before they retire. This research could collect information about teachers' lives in the bilingual education classroom over time. It is important to collect the information from teachers still in the "trenches." If already out of the classroom, even for a short amount of time, it is possible that they will report a romanticized and revisionist view of their classroom experiences.

Further research could benefit from bringing together focus groups consisting of preservice, novice, and veteran bilingual education teachers to dialogue by sharing life experiences. The cross-generational discussions would provide data about connections between identity production, cultural resources, and professional experiences. In this manner, studies could investigate how bilingual educators' identities influence their teaching practices with CLD students and how these practices change over time.

Additional research on how to adopt and adapt the Montessori method for dual language classrooms is also needed as far as interrogating alternate pedagogical practices and their effectiveness. Since researchers have questioned pedagogy-as-usual for CLD students (Arce, 2004; hooks, 1994; Nieto, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999), studies could investigate other dual language Montessori classrooms to provide further data on the implementation of this model.

Limitations of the Study

As a qualitative researcher, I have provided detailed, thick description combined with prolonged engagement with Luz. This investigation sought to examine the interplay of cultural values and professional experiences constructed socially and historically that impacted the trajectory of Luz's identity production as a veteran MABE and influenced her teaching practices. While realizing the potential of person-centered ethnography as a methodology and product, I acknowledge its limitations. However, reflexivity in the research process allowed me to confront my assumptions and beliefs. Regarding my subjectivity, three issues could be viewed simultaneously as advantages or disadvantages: (a) my position as a native/insider researcher, (b) the intragroup complexity of the Mexican American experience in Texas, and (c) my own historical and social context. While I matched several of the dimensions of the participant, which contributed to my insider/native status and fostered a sense of trust, Luz and I had many differences. We exemplified the diversity among the historical, regional, generational, and social facets that connect those that identified themselves as Mexican American or Chicana/o. With respect to generalizability, transferability was a more useful way to

regard the findings of my research (Guba & Lincoln, 2000) because it is up to the readers to form their own judgments about whether or not the story I have presented has relevance to their situations and contexts.

Conclusion

Luz has forged her path to become an effective bilingual education teacher, to be an activist Chicana *educadora*, and to belong to networks that supported both. Bringing rich cultural resources as a Mexican American to her successful teaching practices, she illustrated how teachers could bring together their past, present, and future to develop an inclusive pedagogy based on cultural knowledge and authentic caring. She was able to develop an appreciation and awareness of the necessary cultural means to challenge the conventional pedagogy to create opportunities for students to become bilingual/biliterate and academically successful.

Luz's life trajectory demonstrated an evolution that linked her identity as an activist Chicana *educadora* with how she saw herself professionally and personally. The data revealed that she lived her professional life resisting, appropriating, and colliding with mainstream practices because of her consciousness that contributed to continual improvisation and transformation. Her story highlights how the agency of a Latina teacher in bilingual education informed by autobiographical consciousness allowed her to work within and push the parameters of mainstream public education. Luz's improvised actions reflected her background and personal resources as cultural and social capital to negotiate the multiple figured worlds in which she lived and worked. She was not only aware of the influence of the dominant society and its discourses, but

also acted as and consciously viewed herself as a change agent concerned with educational and social inequities that affected students, parents, and community. It was the intentionality of a change agent that resulted in her acts of agency challenging educational norms.

Bilingual education teachers find themselves in contexts wherein they may go through transformative experiences as they question and explore the cultural efficacy of their teaching (Riojas Clark & Bustos Flores, 2001). Luz chose to be inducted into the figured worlds of bilingual education and public schooling by her choices to major in bilingual education in college, to earn her masters in bilingual education, and to obtain her Montessori certification. This led her to examine issues and heuristically develop identities that continue to be in process. As Holland et al., (1998) explained, "People have the propensity to be drawn to, recruited for, and formed in these worlds, and to become active in and passionate about them" (p. 49). This perspective highlighted that appropriation, production, and improvisation could allow for the possibility of transformation through self-in-practice.

Telling her stories and, with them, revealing her pedagogy and practice, Luz provided insights into how a successful veteran MABE made sense of her lived experience, which may, furthermore, help others achieve understanding of themselves. These narratives uncovered her critical reflections on assumptions and beliefs about bilingualism and biliteracy. For her, the process contributed to the creation of counterstories and to the construction and reconstruction of her identities as an activist

Chicana *educadora* that evolved from her agency and activism for Latina/o students and their families.

Latina/o teachers make their own *camino* (road) and their agency might manifest at the state and national level. However, advocacy could also be engaged in mundane, everyday situations (Urrieta, 2009). In whatever manner and at whatever level that bilingual education teachers operate, they need to be aware of the politicized nature of their work and that they are not alone in tackling the education of Latina/o students. When they wrote about their work with teacher knowledge, Connelly and Clandinin (1999) explained, "We noticed that teachers seemed to be trying to answer different questions. Their questions were ones of identity. They were questions of 'Who am I in my story of teaching?' 'Who am I in my administrator's stories?' 'Who am I in parents' stories?' and so on" (p. 3). For Luz to have answered these kinds of questions without having lost or submerged her ethnic/cultural identities, she developed an autobiographical consciousness that allowed her to incorporate her (re)memberings into her pedagogies. For MABEs, autobiographical telling could be a conduit to autobiographical consciousness with the stories also providing a way to heal wounds resulting from discrimination, as well as the disconnect of home and school experiences.

This person-centered ethnography answered Trueba's (1999) call to make connections among critical ethnographic research, children's cognitive development, and culturally relevant pedagogies for more effective education of Latina/o students:

> Of critical importance in the current national demographic, political, and economic contests, especially in terms of bringing back a discourse that is missing in the literature: a discourse about meeting children's basic developmental and

> academic needs. It is not simply sufficient to recognize the presence of oppression and to criticize schooling, teachers, and social systems. The task is to do this work of critique but also to move towards a realistic approach that links the creation of viable pedagogies to children's empowerment. (p. 593)

My study of Luz reflected a Latina teacher who critiqued the system and adapted a pedagogical approach that matched what she believed was appropriate for her students' development and academic success. The data indicated that Luz acquired the tools to navigate and negotiate the public school system to educate her students effectively by utilizing her funds of knowledge along with her professional experiences. Her trajectory illustrated the importance of social interactions and cultural practices (Nasir & Cook, 2009) that led Luz to embrace her identities of Chicana, activist, and *educadora*.

It is of utmost importance due to the historical moment and demographics that schools prepare students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to become active participants in U.S. democracy. Educators can commit to this challenging task by continual critical examination of biases and assumptions about language minority students and their families. Awareness of social, cultural and historical contexts intertwined with teaching, learning and knowledge brings belief systems about language, learning and pedagogical practices into a dialogical process.

As educators we must examine our assumptions and expectations regarding culturally and linguistically diverse students. Our historical moment calls for critical awareness in enabling pedagogies wherein "day to day practice is embedded with the hope for a domino effect or a ripple effect to bring about larger societal change" (Urrieta, 2005, p. 183). Further as Freire (2000) stated, "Dialogue is the encounter in which the

united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized" (p. 88). With this in mind, I believe it is essential for preservice, novice, and inservice teachers to dialogue about their early experiences, schooling, and teaching, so that they may develop a consciousness of the connections between their multiple identities and their educational philosophy and practice, all with the primary purpose of more effectively educating Latina/o students.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Research Question (RQ):

How do a veteran Mexican American bilingual educator's cultural resources and professional experiences influence her teaching practices?

Sub-Questions (SQ):

SQ1. What is the relationship between the cultural background and professional experiences of a veteran Mexican American bilingual educator?

SQ2. How do her cultural background and professional experiences impact her teaching philosophy and pedagogical practice?

Interview Questions (IQ):

Background and General Information

IQ1. Where were you born?

IQ2. Where did you grow up?

IQ3. Where were your mother and father born?

IQ4. How many siblings do you have?

IQ5. Where are you in the birth order of your family?

IQ6. What do you remember as important experiences when you were growing up?

IQ7. How do you think your family and upbringing influenced you?

IQ8. How many years have you been teaching?

IQ9. In what schools, districts have you worked?

IQ10. What do you consider important regarding your cultural heritage and background?

IQ11. What family values influence you?

IQ12. Who have been influential people in your life? How?

IQ13. How have your values and beliefs changed throughout the years, if at all?

IQ14. What do you see as a successful life?

IQ15. How does someone go about achieving a successful life?

IQ16. What would you list as the most fundamental beliefs by which you live?

Schooling

IQ17. Where did you go to elementary school?

IQ18. What was it like for you in elementary school?

IQ19. Where did you go to middle and high school?

IQ20. What was it like for you in middle and high school?

IQ21. When did you first think about going to college?

IQ22. Why did you decide to go to college?

IQ23. Where did you go to undergraduate school?

IQ24. What was your schooling experience like as an undergraduate?

IQ25. Where did you go to graduate school?

IQ26. What was your schooling experience like as a graduate student?

IQ27. What was your training like in the Montessori course?

IQ28. What were some of your most memorable schooling experiences that influenced your beliefs?

IQ29. What have been discouraging moments in your educational experience and how did you handle the situations?

IQ30. What has positively influenced you while growing up?

IQ31. What has negatively influenced you while growing up?

IQ32. What professional organizations have you been involved in? How?

IQ33. What informal teacher groups have you been involved in? How?

You and Your Work (Past and Present)

Past

IQ34. When did you first become aware you wanted to be a teacher?

IQ35. When did you first think about becoming a bilingual education teacher?

IQ36. Are there other members of your family that are or have been teachers?

IQ37. Why did you become a bilingual education teacher?

IQ38. What do you remember about your first year of teaching?

IQ39. Walk me through your first day of teaching.

IQ40. What events stick out in your mind from your first year of teaching?

IQ41. Tell me what your teaching style was like when you first started teaching?

IQ42. How did you use Spanish and English during your first teaching years?

IQ43. What has positively influenced you in your teaching?

IQ44. What has negatively influenced you in your teaching?

Present

IQ45. What do you think you bring to the classroom that others don't bring?

IQ46. What kinds of values, knowledge, and beliefs do you bring to your work?

IQ47. What do you do to refine/develop/improve your general teacher skills?

IQ48. What do you do to refine/develop/improve your skills as a bilingual teacher?

IQ49. What are the most difficult obstacles that bilingual education teachers must overcome?

IQ50. Given the opportunity, what steps would you initiate to improve the effectiveness of bilingual education teachers in your school?

IQ51. How do you use Spanish and English in your classroom this year?

IQ52. How will you work with your parents this year?

IQ53. Tell me about your school outside of your classroom this year.

IQ54. Tell me about the district this year.

IQ55. What do you hope to accomplish during this year of teaching?

IQ56. How do you define your students' success?

IQ57. Tell me about the parents of your students.

IQ58. Pick any five words that describe your school climate.

IQ59. What keeps you working with ELLs?

IQ60. What keeps you going as a bilingual education teacher?

IQ61. Take me through your day.

Teachers and Teaching

IQ62. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of an excellent bilingual education teacher?

IQ63. Describe what you think would be an ideal bilingual education school.

IQ64. How should teachers help second language learners succeed in school?

IQ65. How should you measure the success of a bilingual education teacher?

IQ66. How can a principal help a bilingual education teacher to become more effective?

IQ67. What are the most important outcome/goals of schooling in general?

IQ68. Why do you think some ELLs are successful in school?

IQ69. Why do you think some ELLs fail in school?

IQ70. What is the most important responsibility of a bilingual education teacher at our present moment?

IQ71. What are the most important outcome/goals of bilingual education? Why?

IQ72. What do you think about bilingual education today?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol Matrix

RQ		
DOMAIN	**SQ1**	**SQ2**
Background and General Information	IQ1, IQ2, IQ3, IQ4, IQ5, IQ6, IQ7, IQ9	IQ6, IQ7, IQ8, IQ10, IQ11, IQ12, IQ13, IQ14, IQ15, IQ16
Schooling	IQ17, IQ18, IQ19, IQ20, IQ21, IQ22, IQ23, IQ24, IQ25, IQ26, IQ27, IQ28, IQ29, IQ30, IQ31, IQ32, IQ33	IQ22, IQ32, IQ33
You and Your Work	IQ34, IQ35, IQ36, IQ37, IQ38, IQ39, IQ40, IQ41, IQ42, IQ47, IQ48, IQ49, IQ50, IQ53, IQ54, IQ58	IQ34, IQ35, IQ37, IQ43, IQ44, IQ45, IQ46, IQ51, IQ52, IQ53, IQ54, IQ55, IQ56, IQ57, IQ59, IQ60
Teachers and Teaching	IQ61	IQ62, IQ63, IQ64, IQ65, IQ66, IQ67, IQ68, IQ69, IQ70, IQ71, IQ72

Appendix C: Timed Teacher Observation

Date: _____

Start Time	End Time	Observed Behavior

Appendix D: Structured Observation

DATE: _____ START TIME: _____END TIME: _____

Context:

CONTENT/LESSON DESIGN

TEACHER BEHAVIOR

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT/ENVIRONMENT

CONTENT/LESSON DESIGN

1. Uses a variety of resources.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
2. Uses more than one method of instruction.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
3. Makes "real-world" connections.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
4. Provides practice for students.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
5. Plans integrated instruction.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
6. Demonstrates knowledge of content.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
7. Provides evidence of instructional goals.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
8. Places concepts of lesson in larger topic of study.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
9. Uses time efficiently.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**

TEACHER BEHAVIOR

1. Encourages high quality responses within the context of the lesson.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
2. Monitors student understanding and reteaches.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
3. Encourages student effort.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
4. Uses formative assessment to give feedback.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
5. Encourages student engagement.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
6. Communicates interest and caring to students.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
7. Demonstrates creativeness in instruction.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
8. Demonstrates resourcefulness.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
9. Gives clear definitions and explanations.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
10. Uses a variety of questioning strategies.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
11. Treats all students positively, fairly and equitably.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
12. Stimulates students' interests.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
13. Allows time to think/reflect.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT/ENVIRONMENT

1. Maintains a high quality learning environment.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
2. Manages (corrects/redirects) student behavior as needed.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
3. Manages classroom procedures.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
4. Creates an environment of respect and rapport.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**
5. Creates an environment conducive to learning.	**N**	**R**	**O**	**F**

Appendix E: Letter to Faculty and Staff

To: Faculty and Staff at [redacted] Elementary School

From: Linda Guardia Jackson

Date: September 2, 2007

Re: Research Study

I would like to introduce myself and discuss what I will be doing at [redacted] Elementary School during 2007-2008. I am a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction in the area of Cultural Studies in Education at the University of Texas at Austin. I will be conducting my research over the course of the school year. This will entail being at the school for two days a week in the fall and one day a week in the spring.

I am particularly interested in the funds of knowledge of a veteran Latina teacher in bilingual education and the impact on classroom practice and pedagogy. I will be focused on one teacher, [redacted].

If you have any questions, contact me at lgjackson@mail.utexas.edu or 210-241-9039 (cell).

Thank you.

Appendix F: Letter to Parents (Spanish)

Linda Guardia Jackson
3703 John Alden
San Antonio, TX 78230

2 de noviembre 2007

Padres Queridos,

Quisiera introducirme y discutir lo que haré en clase de [redacted] en la escuela primaria de [redacted] durante 2007-2008. Soy un candidato doctoral en plan de estudios e instrucción en el área de estudios culturales en la educación en la universidad de Texas en Austin. Conduciré una investigación sobre el curso del año escolar. Planeo estar en la escuela y en la clase de [redacted] dos días de la semana en la mañana en el otoño y un día de la semana en la mañana en la primavera.

La investigación será sobre la educación bilingüe y maestros de la educación bilingüe. Estoy particularmente interesada en [redacted] como maestra veterana en la educación bilingüe y sus prácticas en el salon de clase.

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, por favor contacte a [redacted] en la escuela o me puede contactar a mi en la información siguiente:

Linda Guardia Jackson
lgjackson@mail.utexas.edu
210-241-9039 (celular)

Gracias,

Linda Guardia Jackson
Candidato Doctoral
Estudios Culturales en la Educación
Universidad de Texas en Austin

Appendix G: Letter to Parents (English)

LINDA GUARDIA JACKSON
3703 JOHN ALDEN
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78230

November 2, 2007

Dear Parents,

I would like to introduce myself and discuss what I will be doing in [redacted] class at [redacted] Elementary School during 2007-2008. I am a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction in the area of Cultural Studies in Education at the University of Texas at Austin. I will be conducting my research over the course of the school year. I plan to be at the school and in [redacted] class for two mornings a week in the fall and one morning a week in the spring.

My research is about bilingual education and bilingual education teachers. I am particularly interested in [redacted] as a veteran teacher in bilingual education and her classroom practices.

If you have any questions, please contact [redacted] at the school or me. My contact information is below:

Linda Guardia Jackson
lgjackson@mail.utexas.edu
210-241-9039 (cell).

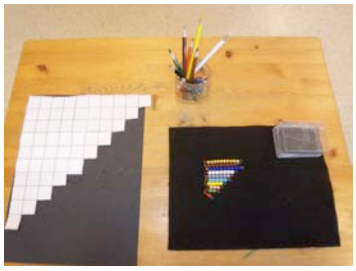
Thank you.

Linda Guardia Jackson
Doctoral Candidate
Cultural Studies in Education
University of Texas at Austin

Appendix H: Menu Board Photos

1. Formas de metal/Metal Insets

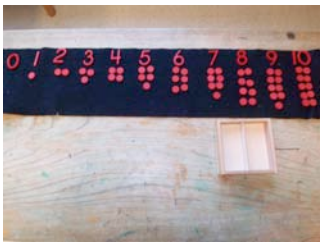
2. ILA (tarjetas de sonidos initiales)/ ILA (Initial Sound Cards)



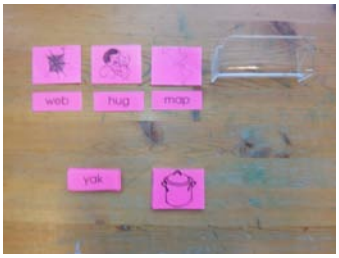
3. Escalón de cuentas/Bead Stair

4. ILA (objectos con sonidos) / ILA (objects with Moveable Alphabet)

5. Cajas de palitos/Spindle Boxes



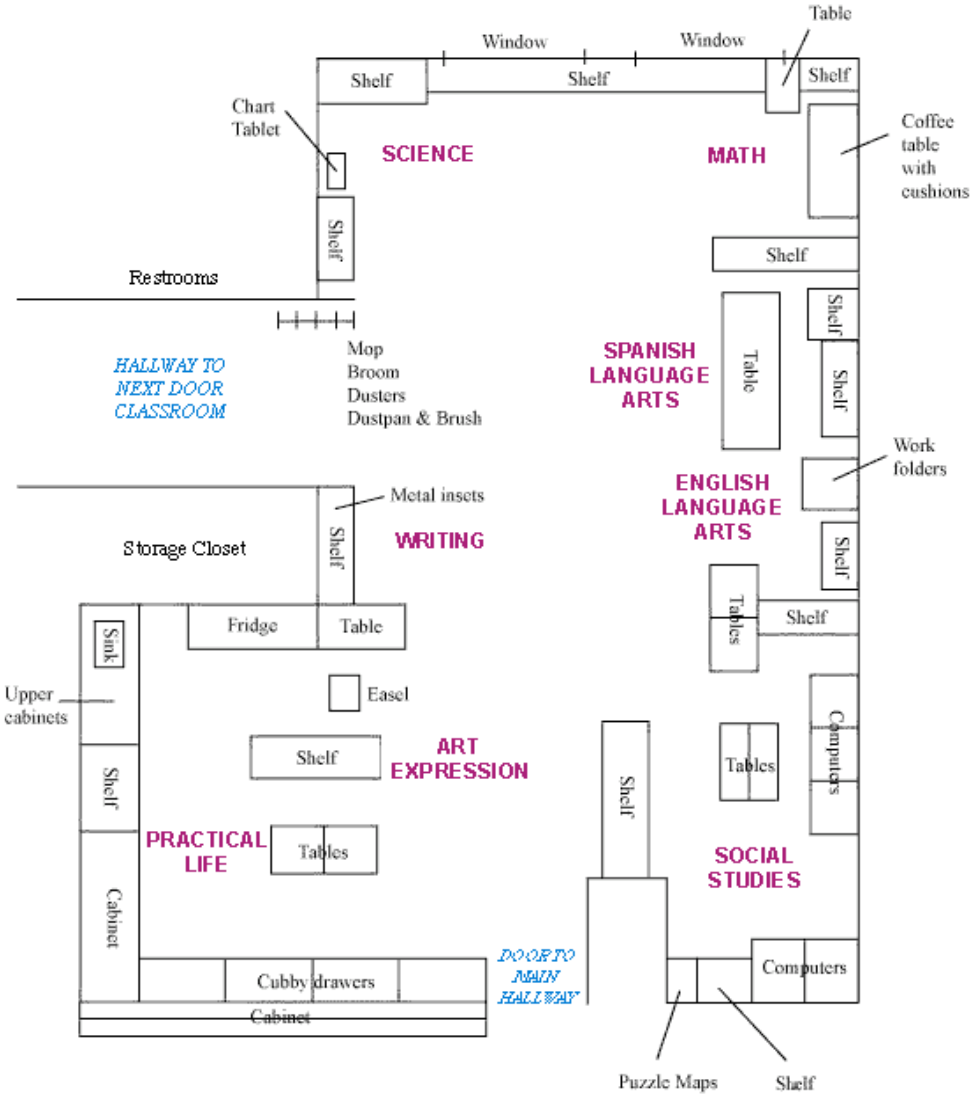
6. Pares y nones/Odd and Even



7. ILA (dibujos con nombres)/ ILA (pictures with labels)

Appendix I: Classroom Layout

The 1st Grade Classroom



Appendix J: Primary Participant Consent Form

IRB# 07-07-0054

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

The University of Texas at Austin

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Title of Research Study: *Shaping a Borderland Professional Identity: The Funds of Knowledge of a Mexican American Educator*

Principal Investigator(s) (include faculty sponsor), UT affiliation, and Telephone Number(s):

Linda Guardia Jackson (Principal Investigator)
3703 John Alden San Antonio, Texas 78230
210-241-9039 lgjackson@mail.utexas.edu
Graduate Student
Angela Valenzuela, Ph.D. (Faculty Sponsor)
The University of Texas at Austin
512-471-7551

Funding source: Personal funds.

What is the purpose of this study? The proposed research will provide qualitative data for a dissertation at the University of Texas at Austin. The purpose of this study is to examine the identity and agency of an exemplary Mexican American teacher in bilingual education to understand the influences of funds of knowledge and ways of knowing on pedagogical philosophy and practice.

What will be done if you take part in this research study? Taking part in this research study will entail approximately 30 hours of your time over a period of 12 months, 20 hours for interviews and 10 hours for member checking. Additionally, classroom observations will entail two days a week in the fall and one day a week in the spring. I will gather information from you through interviews, ejournaling, and classroom observations from August 2007 through June 2008. After transcriptions are done, you will be asked to read your contributions to check for accuracy. After the data is analyzed and interpreted you will be asked to read this information to check for accuracy.

What are the possible discomforts and risks? The discomforts and risks of this study are the same as those incurred when holding a conversation or providing instruction in the classroom. Although there may be risks that are unknown at this time, there are no anticipated risks. However, talking about life experiences may cause some emotional stress or uncomfortable feelings. If you feel in any way uncomfortable, please let me know. If you wish, I will turn off the tape recorder or stop the interview. However, most subjects enjoy talking about their experiences.

If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call the Principal Investigator listed on the front page of this form.

What are the possible benefits to you or to others? There are no direct benefits to you for your participation in this study. However, there may be benefits to the educational community at large. This study is significant because it will provide important information for educators and teacher trainers concerned with effectively serving culturally and linguistically diverse student populations.

If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything? Participation in this research study will be of no cost to you.

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study? You will receive no compensation for participation in this study.

What if you are injured because of the study? As stated above, the risk level of this study is very minimal. Although there are no anticipated risks related to this study, basic

courtesies will be extended to you in the unlikely event of injury (e.g., the researcher will call for help for you). However, no medical treatment will be provided or available in case of injury as a result of participation in this study and no payment can be provided in the event of a medical problem.

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin or Austin Independent School District.

How can you withdraw from this research study and who should I call if I have questions?

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact: Linda Guardia Jackson, Principal Investigator at (210) 241-9039 or Angela Valenzuela, Ph.D at (512) 232-6008. You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or the Office of Research Support and Compliance at (512) 471-8871.

How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?

Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. If the research project is sponsored then the sponsor also has the legal right to review your research records. Otherwise, your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Your responses will not be linked with your name in any written or verbal report of this research project. The audiocassettes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. All audiotapes and information about you will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's home office. The tapes will be retained for possible future analysis for eight years and then destroyed. The researcher and researcher's associates such as faculty sponsor will hear the audiotapes only for research purposes. Field notes written by the researcher during

interviews and site visits will be identified using a code so that no personally identifying information is visible.

Written excerpts from the recordings may be used in published articles or presented at professional conferences and scientific meetings. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study? The benefit to the researcher of this study is the opportunity to add to the body of qualitative research on an exemplary teacher's identity and agency and the perceived influence on pedagogical practices when working with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

_____

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent Date

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

_____

Printed Name of Participant Date

_____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Signature of Principal Investigator Date

We may wish to present some of the audiotapes from this study at scientific conventions or as demonstrations in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to do so.

I hereby give permission for the audiotape made for this research study to be also used for educational purposes

_____

Signature of Participant Date

Appendix K: Consent Form II (Other Than Primary Participant)

IRB#2007-07-0054_

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

The University of Texas at Austin

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Title of Research Study: *Shaping a Borderland Professional Identity: The Funds of Knowledge of a Mexican American Educator*

Principal Investigator, UT affiliation, and Telephone Number(s):

Linda Guardia Jackson (Principal Investigator)
3703 John Alden San Antonio, Texas 78230
210-241-9039 lgjackson@mail.utexas.edu
Graduate Student
Angela Valenzuela, Ph.D. (Faculty Sponsor)
The University of Texas at Austin
512-471-7551

Funding source: Personal funds.

What is the purpose of this study? The proposed research will provide qualitative data for a dissertation at the University of Texas at Austin. The purpose of this study is to examine the identity and agency of an exemplary Mexican American teacher in bilingual education to understand the influences of funds of knowledge and ways of knowing on pedagogical philosophy and practice.

What will be done if you take part in this research study? Taking part in this research study will entail approximately 1 to 2 hours of your time for one interview. After transcriptions are done, you will be asked to read your contributions to check for accuracy. After the data is analyzed and interpreted you will be asked to read this information to check for accuracy.

What are the possible discomforts and risks? The discomforts and risks of this study are the same as those incurred when holding a conversation or providing instruction in the classroom. Although there may be risks that are unknown at this time, there are no anticipated risks. However, talking about life experiences may cause some emotional stress or uncomfortable feelings. If you feel in any way uncomfortable, please let me know. If you wish, I will turn off the tape recorder or stop the interview. However, most subjects enjoy talking about their experiences.

If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call the Principal Investigator listed on the front page of this form.

What are the possible benefits to you or to others? There are no direct benefits to you for your participation in this study. However, there may be benefits to the educational community at large. This study is significant because it will provide important information for educators and teacher trainers concerned with effectively serving culturally and linguistically diverse student populations.

If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything? Participation in this research study will be of no cost to you.

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study? You will receive no compensation for participation in this study.

What if you are injured because of the study? As stated above, the risk level of this study is very minimal. Although there are no anticipated risks related to this study, basic courtesies will be extended to you in the unlikely event of injury (e.g., the researcher will call for help for you). However, no medical treatment will be provided or available in case of injury as a result of participation in this study and no payment can be provided in the event of a medical problem.

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin or Austin Independent School District.

How can I withdraw from this research study and whom should I call if I have questions?

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact: Linda Guardia Jackson, Principal Investigator at (210) 241-9039 or Angela Valenzuela, Ph.D at (512) 232-6008. You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Jody Jensen, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685 or the Office of Research Support and Compliance at (512) 471-8871.

How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?

Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. If the research project is sponsored then the sponsor also has the legal right to review your research records. Otherwise, your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Your responses will not be linked with your name in any written or verbal report of this research project. The audiocassettes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. All audiotapes and information about you will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's home office. The tapes will be retained for possible future analysis for eight years and then destroyed. The researcher and researcher's associates such as faculty sponsor will hear the audiotapes only for research purposes. Field notes written by the researcher during the interview will be identified using a code so that no personally identifying information is visible.

Written excerpts from the recordings may be used in published articles or presented at professional conferences and scientific meetings. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study? The benefit to the researcher of this study is the opportunity to add to the body of qualitative research on an exemplary teacher's identity and agency and the perceived influence on pedagogical practices when working with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

_____

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent Date

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

_____

Printed Name of Participant Date

_____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Signature of Principal Investigator Date

We may wish to present some of the audiotapes from this study at scientific conventions or as demonstrations in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to do so.

I hereby give permission for the audiotape made for this research study to be also used for educational purposes

_____

Signature of Participant Date

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